ASPECTS OF POLITICAL IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS IN ANCIENT INDIA

R. S. SHARMA

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Preface to the Second Edition

The reviews and criticisms of the book in the first edition have been taken into account. In addition to minor alterations and additions in the chapters that have been retained, a few major changes have been made. Since the chapters on Land Revenue System in the Pre-Maurya Period and Origins of Feudalism contain considerable matter on early economy they have been taken out. New chapters on Sources and Method, *Sabhā* and *Samiti*, the Sātavāhana Polity, the Gupta Polity and Stages in Ancient Indian Polity have been inserted. I have however added only as much as is based on fresh survey or investigation.

I wish to acknowledge the help given by Dr. Mrs. Suvira Jaiswal, Mr. Jagannath Mishra, Dr. Sitaram Rai and Mr. P. C. Ray. My thanks are due to Dr. D. N. Jha, who has helped me with the correction of the proofs and the preparation of the index.

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May 1968.

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Preface to the First Edition

In 1951, when Political Thought and Administration in Ancient India was introduced as a special paper at the M.A. stage in History at the Patna University, I began a more careful study of the subject for lecturing to my students. In course of my pursuit I discovered that in spite of two dozen monographs on the subject there was scope for new lines of enquiry. The following pages, therefore, embody the results of that investigation and are intended to focus light only on those problems which are considered rather obscure or need to be studied *de novo*. About one half of this book has already been published in the form of articles. But for the purpose of the present work those essays have been re-touched, edited and brought into some sort of relation with the additional material, both in form and substance. The chapters dealing exclusively with political ideas have been put at the beginning, and the others have been arranged in chronological order. In the case of the discussion of the origins of feudalism, its economic aspects, though not quite relevant to the theme of the book, have also been taken into account. Although the book as it has emerged, can hardly be regarded a coherent study of the subject, it is not without some connecting threads and assumptions.

In the preparation of the book I have received valuable help and guidance from Professor A. L. Basham, who kindly went through more than half of the matter in 1955-7. I must express my sense of gratitude to Dr. Yogendra Mishra, who has saved me from several slips and errors in the preparation of the press copy. I also must thank Mr. Surendra Gopal, Mr. Chandra Shekhar Prasad Singh, Dr. Upendra Thakur

and several other friends and students, who have helped me in different ways. My thanks are due to Mrs. Suvira Jayaswal and Dwijendra Narayan Jha, who have assisted me in preparing the index, and to Dr. Dev Raj Chanana for his help in the correction of the proofs. Finally, I have to thank my wife, Mrs. Malina Sharma, who cheerfully put up with all domestic worries and enabled me to devote my time to the present study.

R. S. SHARMA

Roman Equivalents of Nāgarī Letters

अ	a	ए	e	क्	k	च्	c
आ	ā	ऐ	ai	ख्	kh	छ्	ch
इ	i	ओ	o	ग्	g	ज्	j
ई	ī	औ	au	घ्	gh	झ्	jh
उ	u	ऋ	ṛ	ङ्	ṅ	ञ्	ñ
ऊ	ū						
ट्	ṭ	त्	t	प्	p	य्	y
ठ्	ṭh	थ्	th	फ्	ph	र्	r
ड्	ḍ	द्	d	ब्	b	ल्	l
ढ्	ḍh	ध्	dh	भ्	bh	व्	v
ण्	ṇ	न्	n	म्	m	श्	ś
ष्	ṣ	Anusvāra	—	ṁ			
स्	s	Visarga	:	ḥ			
ह	h						

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	*Aeschylus and Athens* by George Thomson.
AI	*Ancient India*, Delhi.
AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.*
Amara	*Amarakośa.*
Āp. ŚS	*Āpastamba Śrautasūtra.*
AŚ	*Arthaśāstra.*
ASIR	*Archaeological Survey of India, Reports.*
ASR	*Archaeological Survey, Reports.*
ASS	Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series.
AV	*Atharva Veda.*
Baudh.	*Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.*
B. C. Law Vol.	*B. C. Law Volume*, Part II, Ed. D. R. Bhandarkar and others.
BI	Bibliotheca Indica.
Bṛ	*Bṛhaspati Smṛti.*
Br. Ār. Up.	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London.
CCIM	*Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, i.
Cal.	Calcutta Edition of the *Mahābhārata.*
Chā. Up.	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*
CHI	*Cambridge History of India*, Ed. E. J. Rapson.
CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
Cr. Edn.	Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata* published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona.
DN	*Dīgha Nikāya.*
Ed.	Edited by, Edition.
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta and Delhi.
Gaut. Dh. S.	*Gautama Dharmasūtra.*
GOS	Gaikawad Oriental Series.
HCIP	*History and Culture of the Indian People*, Ed. R. C. Majumdar.
Hist. Dhs.	*History of Dharmaśāstra* by P. V. Kane.
HOS	*Harvard Oriental Series.*

HPT	*Hindu Political Theories* by U. N. Ghoshal.
IA	*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay.
IC	*Indian Culture*, Calcutta.
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta.
JA	*Journal Asiatique*, Paris.
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Baltimore.
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.
JAHRS	*Journal of Andhra Historical Society*, Rajahmundry.
Jāt.	*Jātaka.*
JBBRAS	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay.
JBORS	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna.
JDL	*Journal of Department of Letters.*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Leiden.
JGJRA	*Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, Allahabad.
JIH	*Journal of Indian History*, Trivandrum.
JNSI	*Journal of Numismatic Society of India*, Varanasi.
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London.
JRASB	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.
KNS	*Kāmandaka Nītisāra.*
Kāma S.	*Kāmasūtra.*
Kātyā.	*Kātyāyana Smṛti.*
KS	*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā.*
KŚS	*Kātyayana Śrautasūtra.*
Manu	*Manu Smṛti.*
Mārk. P.	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.*
MASI	*Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India.*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata.*
Milinda	*Milindapañho.*
MS	*Maitryāṇī Saṃhitā.*
Nār.	*Nārada Smṛti.*
NS	New Series.
OUP	Oxford University Press.
Pā	*Pāṇini's Grammar.*
PB	*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.*

PGS	*Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra.*
Pat.	Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya.*
P. E.	Pillar Edict of Aśoka.
PHAI	*Political History of Ancient India* by H. C. Raychaudhuri.
Proc. IHC	*Proceedings of Indian History Congress.*
PTS	Pali Text Society.
Rām.	*Rāmāyaṇa.*
R. E.	Rock Edict of Aśoka.
RV	*Ṛg Veda.*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*
SBB	*Sacred Books of the Buddhists.*
SBE	*Sacred Books of the East.*
SE	Southern Edition of the *Mahābhārata* (also indicated as Kumb.)
Sel. Inscrr.	*Select Inscriptions*, i, by D. C. Sircar.
ŚNS	*Śukranītisāra.*
ŚP	*Śānti Parva.*
Śūdras	*Śūdras in Ancient India* by R. S. Sharma.
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.*
TGS	T. Gaṇapati Śāstri's editions of the *Arthaśāstra.*
Tr.	Translated by, Translation.
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā.*
Vā. P.	*Vāyu Purāṇa.*
Vas. Dh. S.	*Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.*
VI	*Vedic Index.*
Vin.	*Vinaya Piṭaka.*
Viṣṇu	*Viṣṇu Smṛti.*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā.*
Yāj.	*Yājñavalkya Smṛti.*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Mörgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, Berlin.

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भवत्यधर्मो धर्मो हि धर्माधर्मावुभावपि ।
कारणादेशकालस्य देशकालः स तादृशः ॥

शान्ति पर्व, ७९।३१

In response to the demands of time and place what is proper may become improper, and what is improper may become proper."

Śānti Parva, 79. 31

CHAPTER I

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY UP TO 1930

The first serious attempt at the study of India's past, on the part of both the Western as well as Indian scholars, began after the revolt of 1857-59[1]. A perusal of some introductions to the *Sacred Books of the East* reveals the motive underlying this great venture extending over years. It was felt by the British rulers that the revolt was due to lack of their knowledge of Indian religion, manners, customs and history. Further, the people could not be won over to Christianity and consequently to the empire unless the missionaries acquired an idea of the vulnerable points in their social structure. According to Max Müller to the missionary an accurate knowledge of the sacred books was as indispensable as the knowledge of the enemy's country to a general[2]. In their study of the ancient history of India Western scholars reached two important conclusions, which can be summed up in the words of Max Müller. In 1859 he wrote that the Indians are a nation of philosophers and Indian intellect is lacking in political or material speculation, and that the Indians never knew the feeling of nationality[3]. We do not know whether Max Müller drew upon the famous dictum of Aristotle that oriental rule is autocratic in character. But his idea was the stock-in-trade of the great European historians who wrote in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus Gibbon pointed out that all oriental history is "one unceasing record of valour, greatness, degeneracy and decay." Green stated that "the empires of the East are, in the main, tax-collecting institutions. They exercise coercive power on their subjects of the most violent kind... (and) do not impose

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1. Although the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 marks the starting point of Western interest in ancient Indian studies the number of books that were published till 1859 was small. Max Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 1.
2. *SBE*, i, pt. I, Preface, p. xl.
3. Max Müller, op.cit., p. 16.

laws as distinct from particular and occasional commands."[1] Similar ideas continued to find expression in the work of eminent orientalists. Writing in 1898 Sénart stated that India never attained to the idea either of the state or of the fatherland[2], and that it could not evolve any political constitution, even in conception[3].

Such a view about India's past history and polity was obviously dominated by imperialist ideology. Its practical implications in the existing set-up were dangerous to the demand for self-government in India. If Indians were essentially philosophers, absorbed in the problems of the spiritual world, it followed that their material world should be managed for them by their imperialist masters. If Indians were accustomed to autocratic rule and never had any idea of nationhood, state or self-government, it was in keeping with their tradition that they should be ruled autocratically by the British Governor-General and Viceroy.

This imperialist ideology regarding ancient history and particularly the nature of the early Indian polity came as a challenge to Indian scholarship and to the few foreign scholars who were yet unaffected by imperialist ideology. In 1889, controverting Max Müller who had said that "to the Greek, existence is full of life and reality, to the Hindu it is a dream and delusion,[4]" the great American savant Hopkins pointed out that the religious element did not penetrate deeply into the vast mass of unpriestly classes[5]. But the biggest response to this challenge came from the Indian scholars themselves. During the last three decades of the 19th century Bhagwan Lal Indraji, R. G. Bhandarkar, R. L. Mitra and B. G. Tilak, most of whom actively associated themselves with the political and social movements of their time, tried to prove the falsity of the imperialist ideology. By their researches into the manifold aspects of the past history of their country they tried to build a powerful case for the political and social progress of the country

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1. Quoted in Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 498.
2. *Caste in India*, p. 198.
3. Ibid., p. 212.
4. *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 18.
5. "Position of the Ruling Caste etc.," *JAOS*, xiii, 182.

in their own times. Since then the study of India's past was mainly guided by the nationalist ideology. The point can be especially illustrated by presenting a rapid survey of research on ancient Indian polity.

Just as there were two phases, moderate and radical, in the growth of the nationalist movement, so also there were two such phases in the progress of research on ancient Indian polity. It is well known that the chief demand of the Indian nationalist movement in its earlier stages was to curtail the powers of the autocratic Viceroy by introducing a popular element at the Centre and in the Provincial Governments. Hence in 1887 R. C. Dutt wrote an article on the "Civilisation in the Brāhmaṇa period," in which he tried to show that in ancient times the king did justice to all[1]. He was followed by Purnendu Narayan Singh, who, in an article in 1894, strongly countered the statement of Sir Auckland Colvin that "the British have taught for the first time that the end and aim of rule is the welfare of the people, and not the personal aggrandisement of the sovereign." He argued that such an idea is due to the ignorance of the system of government in ancient India which, in his opinion, was limited monarchy.[2]

The strong nationalist movement that followed the partition of Bengal in 1905 gave further impetus to research in ancient Indian polity. Curzon's homily on the oriental character, his autocratic measures for the partition of Bengal, and his attack on the elected element in the Calcutta Corporation could not but influence the course of research on ancient polity. In an article written in 1907 A.C. Das repeated with greater emphasis the view of the previous scholars that "it is a mistake to suppose that the Hindus have been accustomed to an autocratic form of Government, and that the popular element never existed as a distinct force in the country." He further said that "it was not Absolute but Limited Monarchy that flourished in Ancient India."[3] Perhaps by way of indirect suggestion that Curzon's attack on the elected element in the Calcutta Corporation was unwarranted, in another essay of

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1. *Calcutta Review*, xxxv (1887), 266.
2. Ibid., xcviii (1894), 301.
3. "Limited Monarchy in Ancient India", *Modern Review*, ii (1907), 346 ff.

the same year Das pointed out that "Local Self-Government existed in Ancient India even in a better form than that in which it exists at present under British rule."[1] Four years later, S. K. Aiyangar in his thesis on Coḷa Administration brought to light the working of elected village panchayats, exercising all functions in early mediaeval times under the Coḷas.[2]

The nationalist movement stimulated the search for ancient manuscripts, resulting in the discovery of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya in 1905 and its publication by Shamasastry in 1909. The discovery was an epoch-making event in the history of the study of ancient Indian polity, for it provided valuable raw material which could be utilised in yielding "political precedents for modern controversies."[3] This was an important factor which contributed to many critical and descriptive studies of the ancient Indian polity.[4]

The period from 1905 was a period of extremist politics. Extremists, who did not believe in constitutional methods for the attainment of slow reforms, set up a net-work of revolutionary societies in Bengal and Maharashtra. The movement was coloured by the spirit of Hindu revivalism. The very names of these societies betray their love for past culture. For instance the Anushilan Samiti, which was set up in 1905 and had about 550 branches by 1907, means the society for the promotion of culture and learning. It is legitimate to suspect that, although wedded to the cult of violence, it must have published certain research tracts of which we are unaware. These societies created a revolutionary temper in the country and prepared the minds of many intellectuals for the complete independence of their motherland. It was through them that the word Swaraj got the widest currency. As interpreted by a left-wing paper it means "self-taxation, self-legislation and self-administration."[5] It is not known whether K. P. Jayaswal was in any

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1. Ibid.
2. *Ancient India* , pp. 158-191.
3. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, p. 87
4. An up-to-date bibliography is found in R. P. Kangle, *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, Part III, University of Bombay, 1965.
5. Quoted in Hiren Mukerjee, *India Struggles for Freedom*, p. 88.

way connected with these societies, but the fact that he was made to resign his post in the postgraduate teaching department of Calcutta University by the Bengal Government in 1912-3 might suggest that he was considered a potential contributor to the "seminaries of sedition."[1] It is to the late K. P. Jayaswal that Indology owes its greatest work on ancient Indian polity. His articles contributed to *Modern Review* between 1912 and 1915—which appeared later in the form of his famons book *Hindu Polity* in 1924--were really pioneer works, as later admitted by D. R. Bhandarkar, R. C. Majumdar, B. K. Sarkar and other scholars who followed him. For the first time he showed the importance of republics in ancient Indian history. He tried to prove that the ancient Hindu political system was partly of republics of the Athenian type, and of constitutional monarchies such as that of Great Britain. There were popular assemblies such as the *paura* and *jānapada*, acting as checks on the powers of the king. According to him these organisations were more advanced than any thing which modern Switzerland or the United States can boast of. At the end of his study Jayaswal concluded : "The constitutional progress made by the Hindus has probably not been equalled much less surpassed by any polity of antiquity." And finally, he expressed the undying hope of a patriot that the "Golden Age of his polity lies not only in the past but in the Future."[2] The implications of his research are clear. His conclusions present the first solid ideological case for complete independence and a republican form of Government in India. It is because of this that no thesis on ancient Indian history has been so frequently quoted as *Hindu Polity*. It became the Bible of the Indian nationalists. Meet any educated old man and he knows about *Hindu Polity*.

Jayaswal was followed by a host of scholars, who flooded *Modern Review*, *Hindustan Review* and *Indian Antiquary* with a spate of articles and wrote a number of theses. In many ways the period between 1916 and 1925, coinciding with post-war nationalist and revolutionary movements sweeping over Europe and Asia, marked the peak of our nationalist movement. No

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1. *Hindu Polity*, p. xxv.
2. Ibid., p. 366.

other period of the present century has produced so many research works on ancient Indian polity as this period of nine years. Leaving aside the articles, the number of monographs on Hindu political theories and institutions would come to more than a dozen. It is not possible to notice the ideological basis of all works, but we can examine the important ones to find out the main trends.

To begin with works of general nature on polity, P. N. Banerjea in his *Public Administration in Ancient India*, published in 1916, points out that the "ancient system of government may thus be called constitutional monarchy." It was "Sachivatantra"[1]. He further says that not only in monarchies but also in republican states the popular assemblies were important in ancient times.[2] In the same year K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar brought out *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, which was based on his lectures delivered in 1914. In his work the author deprecates the tendency to look into the armoury of "our" ancient polity for weapons to be used in the arena of modern political controveries.[3] But at the same time he points out that the undermining of the "current" belief that ancient Indian institutions and political theory were unprogressive will long form a vital condition of a successful, historical study of ancient Indian polity.[4] In his thesis on *Corporate Life in Ancient India* (1918) even a sober historian such as R. C. Majumdar admits that he was led to this line of inquiry through the importance of "the spirit of co-operation" in the present highly developed stage of civilization.[5] In his opening lines in the introduction he says that "India at present is very backward in this particular aspect of culture, but the following pages are intended to show that things were quite different in the past." It pains him to find that it required great effort to believe that political institutions "which we are accustomed to look upon as of western growth had also flourished in India

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1. P. 51.
2. P. 97.
3. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, pp. 3-4. Although the 1935 edition of this book has been consulted, it does not mean any difference in matter except for footnotes and appendices.
4. Rangaswami Aiyangar, op.cit., p. 65.
5. Introduction, p. i.

long ago."[1] At the same time he assails the commonly held view that India was only absorbed in religion. His researches are intended to show that "religion did not engross the whole or even an undue proportion of the public attention." A similar view is expressed by Shamasastry in his book *Evolution of Indian Polity* (1920). He asserts that neither during the Vedic period nor in the times of Kauṭilya divine birth or right of kings seems to have been thought of[2]. Coming to the next publication, *Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity* by N. N. Law (1921), Keith says in his foreword that the development of a keen interest in the history of Indian theories of polity is one of the gratifying consequences of the awakening of political aspirations in India.[3] The longest chapter (IX) in the book is "The Religious Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity." While concluding it, Law states that "there were wide and various fields of political actions in which the Hindu showed considerable judgement and acumen undelegated by the force of beliefs."[4] By 1922 B. K. Sarkar was ready with his *Political Institution and Theories of the Hindus*. In its preface he claims that on fundamental points the volume delivers "a frontal attack on the traditional Western prejudices regarding Asia, such as are concentrated in Hegel, Cousion, Max Müller, Maine, Janet, Smith, Willoughby and Hutington."[5] He deplores that the "servile and degenerate Asia of to-day" should be compared with Asia which was the leader of humanity's progress.[6] Repudiating the suggestion of the influence of religion on politics he says that "Hindu states were thoroughly secular."[7] The idea of secularism was pursued by N. C. Bandyopadhay according to whom the ancient Indian king could neither claim divinity nor possessed any prerogatives.[8] In his opinion the views of thinkers who justify the expulsion or destruction of a tyrant disprove the theory of divinity.[9]

In 1923 there appeared *A History of Hindu Political Theories*

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1. *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 122.
2. P. 145.
3. P. iv.
4. P. 218.
5. P. viii
6. P. 9.
7. P. 13.
8. P. 94.
9. P. 294.

by U. N. Ghoshal.[1] He ably refutes the view of Max Müller and Bloomfield that Hindus, because of certain inherent tendencies in their character, could not conceive of the idea of the state and that there is no provision for the interest of the state in their scheme. His main targets of attack are Western writers of history of political thought such as Janet, Dunning and Willoughby. He questions Janet's estimate that the sole city for the Indian sages is the city divine. This, says Ghoshal, when tested in the light of sober fact, will appear no more than a half truth.[2] Dunning states that the Āryans in India could never develop Political Science as an independent branch of knowledge and free it from its theological and metaphysical environment as the European Āryans did, while Willoughby thinks that because of their supreme faith in the divine creation they were never impelled to enquire into the *rationale* of their institutions.[3] Rejecting this view Ghoshal says that the chief characteristic of the Buddhist political thought is "bold and avowed appeal to human reason."[4] Moreover, he asserts that the Indian states, contrary to the usual view, were not modelled after a uniform pattern, that of despotic monarchy."[5]

In his lectures *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity* delivered in 1925, D. R. Bhandarkar again quotes the same views of Dunning, Max Müller and Bloomfield in order to refute them. In the case of Dunning he makes allowance for the fact that he had no direct knowledge of orientalia. But he sees no justification for the statement of oriental scholars such as Max Müller and Bloomfield, who hold that the Indian never knew the feeling of nationality and that his heart never trembled in the expectation of national applause.[6] He points out that particularly after the discovery of the *Arthaśāstra* "it is no longer correct to assert that the Hindu mind did not conduce to the development

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1. This book has been more than doubled in size and has been reissued in 1959 under the title *A History of Indian Political Ideas* which is a good reference book for details but does not add substantially to the original work.
2. P. 5.
3. P. 8.
4. P. 9.
5. Introduction, p. 2.
6. P. 2.

of political theories, and that the Indians never set up politics as an independent branch of knowledge."[1] While discussing the rules of business in the republican assembly he is apprehensive lest his conclusions are regarded "as prompted by patriotic bias."[2]

The high watermark of this nationalist ideology finding reflection in research on polity can be traced in V. R. R. Dikshitar. His work *Hindu Administrative Institutions*, which he took up as his thesis in 1923 and completed in 1927, goes rather too far in singing the glories of our past institutions. He regards Hindu polity as almost modern. Strongly rebutting the view that pratiotism was not a phenomenon realised in ancient India, he argues that "the oneness of the country and the ideal of every monarch to make a *digvijaya* and achieve sole rule over the world extending from the Cape Comorin to the Himalayas indicate beyond doubt the existence of a strong nationalist feeling in the country." And then he quotes the famous verse *jananī janmabhūmiśca svargādapi garīyasī*.[3] His concluding lines carry exactly the same sense as those of Jayaswal. He says that, though every nation evolved its own polity, no polity had the inherent vitality that Hindu polity possessed. At the end of his work he repeats the robust optimism of Jayaswal that "the Golden Age of his (Hindu) Polity lies not in the past but in the future."[4]

Thus a review of general works on polity during 1916-25 reveals a marked tendency to supply an ideological weapon in the hands of Indian nationalists. The same is the case with certain special works such as those on Local Self-Government and International Law in Ancient India. R. K. Mookerji's *Local Government in Ancient India* seeks to modify the opinion of such critics as declare that "In ancient India there was nothing of the nature of a political institution between the village and central government"[5] Like other scholars Mookerji also feels that to see endless repetitions of autocratic and theocratic institutions in Indian history is a great source of histori-

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1. P. 3.
2. P. 77.
9. P. 78.
4. P. 384, bracketted portion ours.
5. P. 316.

cal misinterpretation.[1] He claims that the study of ancient Indian local institutions will point the way to the lines of development on which reconstruction should proceed. On the other hand, "to the people it will bring a new inspiration, a fresh stimulus to national self-respect that will look back with pride on the record of institutions which gave them at once the blessings of self-rule and a means of self-preservation amidst adverse political conditions".[2]

Similar sentiment is expressed in P. N. Banerjea's work *International Law and Custom in Ancient India* (1920). Banerjea says that imbued with imperialistic ideas Hall considers International Law as a "favoured monopoly" of the European family of nations.[3] He complains that even a considerate publicist such as Lawrence regards the Indian troops as "semi-civilized or imperfectly civilized troops" and that he recommends their use against border tribes and in warfare with people of the same degree of education as themselves.[4] The object of Banerjea's thesis is "to establish the apparently incredible fact that *the ancient Indians had a definite knowledge of the rules of International Law according to which they regard their international conduct*[5]." S. V. Viswanath's *International Law in Ancient India* institutes a comparison between the first world war, which was waged in contravention of the accepted laws of nations and in defiance of all notions of international morality laying its hand on combatants and non-combatants alike,[6] and the wars in ancient India, which were fought according to the rules of *Dharmayuddha* and in which wholesale destruction and devastation was forbidden.[7]

Between 1925 and 1930 the number of works on ancient polity was comparatively fewer than what it was between 1916 and 1925. In 1927 N. C. Bandyopadhay brought out two books *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, and *Kauṭilya*. While in the former he tried to demolish the belief that India was the birth place and the peculiar habitation of despotic power, in the latter he concluded that Kauṭilya "dreams the prospect of a truly 'national king' who was to

1. Introduction, p. xiii.
2. Pp. 21-22.
3. *JDL*, i (1920), 202.
4. Ibid., p. 203.
5. Ibid. 6. Pp. 3-4. 7. P. 126.

merge even his identity with customs and language."[1] But Beni Prasad, who published his two books *State in Ancient India* and *Government in Ancient India* about the same time, sounded a word of warning against reading too much of modern ideas into ancient institutions. Nevertheless, to prove the superiority of early Indian institutions over the Greek and Roman systems he said that in ancient India there was no aristocracy in the Greek or Roman sense. Caste forbade a combination of office, wealth and prestige of birth as in other countries.[2] In 1931 S. K. Aiyangar published his *Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India* "for an understanding of the native Indian theory of government so that there may be a correct apprehension of the constitutional needs of the country."[3] He flatters himself with the idea that the ancient "administration seems to have made a clear, but close approach to these ideals which modern democracy is making an effort at realising."[4] An important work of specific nature published in 1929 was *Contributions to the History of the Hindu Revenue System* of U. N. Ghoshal. Therein he states that the principles of taxation formulated in early times "surpass the achievements of classical antiquity and tend to approach the ideas of European thinkers in the 18th and early 19th centuries."[5] In his opinion the view that taxes are the king's dues for the service of protection is identical with the similar doctrine of 17th and 18th century Europe.[6]

Thus a reviewer of Dikshitar's *Hindu Administrative Institutions* in 1929 rightly pointed out that "the general trend of the works during the last fifteen years has been to show that the government of the country in ancient days was not irresponsible, that there was public opinion with recognised channels for the expression thereof, that public opinion was respected in almost all cases by the powers, that it could grow at times so powerful as to lead to the abdication or dethronement of the ruler, and so on."[7] There is no doubt that this whole

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1. P. 298.
2. *The State in Ancient India*, pp. 7-8.
3. P. v.
4. P. 379.
5. P. 14.
6. P. 17.
7. *JIH*, viii (1929), 405.

series of research works on the history of political theories and institutions was written with a purpose. It was meant to bring grist to the nationalist mill and to sustain the nationalist movement. After 1930 there set in a stagnation in research, and few works on polity were produced in the following twenty years or so. The books that appeared during this period mostly covered the old ground.

Here let us pause and consider the merits and limitations of the nationalist and revivalist line of approach in the study of India's past polity. Its one great result was that by presenting an encouraging picture of the past it filled the people with great self-confidence. As a scholar of Hindu polity says in 1922, "the nationalist movement of Young India which has won recognition as a world force in international politics since August 7, 1905, is receiving a conscious guidance and direction from the solid results of unquestionable antiquarian investigation."[1] This knowledge of ancient polity gave tongue to those who advocated self-government and independence of India. If they had self-government in the past, there was no reason why they should not have it in the present. Secondly, this ideology produced splendid research works, and certain points regarding the prevalence of limited monarchy, republics, local self-government and international law in ancient India came to be accepted by nearly all scholars, in spite of the dissenting note of V. Smith that it was not safe to rely on the admonitions of the early sages about the ideal king.

But this nationalist ideology had also its limitations. First, while it did serve to rouse the educated middle class against alien rule, it hardly appealed to conscious intellectuals interested in the masses of peasants and workers who were being drawn into the national struggle from 1920 onward. By a fulsome adoration of ancient Hindu institutions it tended to antagonise the Muslims, though this was not done deliberately. Secondly, it gave us a false sense of past values. It glossed over the fact that, whether it was monarchy or republic, the two upper varṇas dominated the two lower varṇas, who were generally excluded from all political offices. It also ignored the fact that one fundamental feature of our legislation was that it worked

1. B. K. Sarkar, *The Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus*, p. 4

in the interests of the upper varṇas. It did not pay attention to the fact that the ruling class consciously exploited religion for the promotion of their political interests. It never took into consideration the fact that wealth and political offices went hand in hand.

Thirdly, many Indian scholars fought shy of the religious aspects of ancient Indian polity and, as if to cover a sense of guilt, took too much pains to prove the secular character of the ancient Indian state, little realising that evcn in the Western world the first completely secular state did not come into existence before 1783 and that India was not the only country where religion influenced political ideas and actions.[1]

Fourthly, in its craze for proving the superiority of our ancient institutions over those of the ancient West it hardly tried to examine them in the light of the evolution of primitive tribes as known from anthropology, or in the light of the early institutions of other Indo-European peoples.

At the present moment the chief limitation of this ideology follows from the fact that imperialist domination has ended. And the new problems are those of the uplift of the common people for whom the long national struggle was waged. Because of these limitations it appears that the possibilities of research in ancient Indian polity on purely nationalistic lines have been almost exhausted. We are in need of an objective approach free from cheap generalisations. In 1951 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri gave hint of a new ideology when he said that Āpastamba and Manu provide for a welfare state.[2] It is for students of Indian polity to judge how far such an approach opens up lines of further research.

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1. The religious aspect has been emphasised recently in Charles Drekmeir, *Community and Kingship in Early India* (1962) and J. W. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India* (1963).

2. *Proceedings of the 16th Session of the All-India Oriental Conference*, Lucknow 1951, pp. 67-68.

Chapter II

SOURCES AND METHOD

Until we come to the first law-books known as Dharma-sūtras the main source for the study of ancient Indian political ideas and institutions is provided by the Vedic literature. The earliest Vedic manuscripts are not older than the 10th century A. D., and inscriptional evidence for writing in India between the 15th and 3rd century B. C. is wanting. But some Ṛg-Vedic gods are mentioned in the Mitannian inscription of the 14th century B.C., and the great reverential attitude to the *Ṛg Veda* leading to its correct recitation and consequent oral preservation suggests that it was compiled, at least orally, around 1200 B. C. or so. However, even the fidelity towards its recitation did not prevent its inflation at the beginning and end, which is a common feature of many other ancient Indian texts. Therefore in using the *Ṛg Veda* for the study of tribal assemblies such as *sabhā*, *samiti*, *vidatha*, *gaṇa*, etc., or social categories such as brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, etc., or of references to *rājan* and its synonyms one has to be wary about their occurrences in BKS I & X, which were added to the main body later. Perhaps it would be better to use BK X for the post-Ṛg Vedic period. The area covered by the Ṛg Vedic references is generally taken to be the Panjab or the land of five rivers, but some tribal institutional practices may have their counterparts in other ancient Indo-European texts which were composed in Greece or Iran. A study of such parallels prevalent in different countries might help to trace the elements of common heritage in the Vedic public life.

The later Vedic texts were compiled in western U. P., in the land of Kuru and Pañcāla. To the *Ṛg Veda*, a book of prayers, these add rituals which have to be rationalised for reconstructing the polity of the period *c.* B. C. 1000-500. The various collections (*saṃhitās*) of the *Yajus*, Black and White, are a storehouse of rituals, public and private. In using them however one has to take account of the various strata of the same text such as the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, whose sections from 19 to 40 were composed much later.

In the Brāhmaṇas rituals are supplemented by a few explanations and speculations regarding the origin of kingship. The two texts that are useful for our purpose are the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, but their date cannot be pushed much beyond 700 B.C. or so. The geographical area of the later text also includes eastern U. P. and north Bihar, west of the Gandak. The form of political organisation deducible from the rituals in the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas would be generally true of U.P., although the area down to the Narmada river in the south seems to have come within the pale of āryanisation, and forms of government mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* may apply to this area.

Upaniṣads are regarded as philosophical works, but the origin of kingship and similar themes do not interest them. Incidental references to *samiti* and tribal identities throw some light on later Vedic polity, although the texts in which they occur cannot be taken much beyond 500 B.C.

Because of the publication of the comprehensive word-index to the Vedic literature by the Vishweswarananda Institute, Hoshiarpur, it is not difficult to look up terms of institutional import. But caution has to be exercised in consulting those Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, and Śrautasūtras which are compiled after 500 B.C. and even in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Vedic literature being mainly religious in nature, it becomes a little difficult to isolate facts of polity from it. The Dharmasūtras, or the earliest law-books written in prose during the period *c.* 500-200 B.C., do not present this difficulty. Of the four law-books those of Āpastamba and Baudhāyana seem to have been the oldest, and not of Gautama as is generally supposed ; the law-book of Vasiṣṭha is also a later work.

The Dharmasūtras are the earliest texts dealing with the duties of the king and the four varṇas or social orders and provide laws regarding taxation and the protection of property, family and person. They offer the first systematic exposition of the brāhmaṇical view of the social and political order. It is an idealised picture, which can be partly corrected with reference to the Greek accounts and early Pāli texts.

The Dharmasūtras—also known as Dharmaśāstras which covers all kinds of legal texts including commentaries—deve-

loped into the Smṛtis, written in verse. The oldest and most well-known of the Smṛtis is that of Manu, also called *Manu-Saṃhitā* or *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra*. About a century ago Bühler assigned it to 200 B.C.—A.D. 200, and later Jayaswal thought it to be a product of the Śuṅga period on the ground that it exalts the position of the brāhmaṇas and accords divine sanction to kingship. But its style and contents suggest its final compilation in the first or the second century A.D. For our purpose the subject of *rājadharma* treated in Chapter VII of this text is most valuable. It not only deals with the duties of the king but also lays down the principles of taxation and points out the importance of the coercive authority symbolised by the term *daṇḍa*. The *Viṣṇu Smṛti* seems to have been composed in the same period, and shows a developed legal structure in its treatment of the problem of inheritance.

The *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, assignable to the period *c.* A.D. 200-400, arranges the material of Manu in a more concise and systematic manner. It has many provisions in common with the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya from which it evidently borrowed. With its commentary *Mitākṣarā* written by Vijñāneśvara in the 11th century it came to form the basis of the Hindu civil law.

But the three completely legal Smṛtis are those of Nārada, Bṛhaspati and Kātyāyana. The first two belong to the 5th century A.D. and the last probably to the sixth century A.D. Nārada uses the term *dīnāra*, which appears in inscriptions from the second century A.D. and helps to fix his date. Bṛhaspati may be a little later. His book forms a landmark in legal history, for he treats the law under 18 titles, of which 14 may be placed under civil and 4 under criminal law. Only the *vyavahāra khaṇḍa* of Kātyāyana has been recovered, which shows that it is exclusively a work on civil law; it also lays down detailed judicial procedure.

The study of the Smṛtis is beset with two difficulties. In the first place they repeat the same idea and statement *ad nauseam*. This is because most later Smṛtis such as Yājñavalkya, Nārada and Bṛhaspati are based on Manu, and explain and amplify his provisions on different topics. This creates an impression of very little development in ancient Indian polity in the first six centuries of the Christian era. But a careful

study of the variations on different subjects will surely help dispel this notion. Secondly, the ideas of commentators who continued their work till the 18th century or even later are fathered on the original lawgivers. There are as many as seven commentators on Manu ranging from the 9th to the 16th century, and they naturally interpret the original in the light of conditions in their times and areas. This creates a false image of Manu's times, and will have to be borne in mind in relation to all the other Smṛtis.

If we can steer clear of these two difficulties the Smṛtis give us a good idea of the royal functions, position of ministers or advisers known variously as *mantrin*, *saciva*, *amātya*, *pārṣada* and *sabhya*, and inter-state relations. Above all they enlighten us about the judicial machinery and the type of law that was administered by it. Manu and Yājñavalkya contain sections on expiations and ethical code which will not be regarded as law from the modern point of view, but Nārada, Bṛhaspati and Kātyāyana are almost exclusively legal texts.

The Smṛti portions are also found in the epics and Purāṇas. The idea that there was an epic period will have to be discarded in the study of political ideas and organisation. It is difficult to use the material drawn from the *Mahābhārata* for one particular period, for its narrative portion looks back to as early as the 10th century B.C. and didactic and descriptive portions belong to as late as the 4th century A.D. Originally this epic consisted of 24,000 ślokas, later inflated to 1,00,000 ślokas, which number is mentioned in a Gupta inscription although the Critical Edition now consists of nearly 82,000 ślokas. Three *parvas*, the *Sabhā*, the *Śānti* and the *Anuśāsana*, are useful for the history of political ideas and practice. The date of the compilation of the first cannot be pushed beyond the first century B.C. The *Anuśāsana* was probably compiled at about the same time as the *Śānti*. Undoubtedly the *rājadharma* section of the *Śānti Parva* is the most important for our purpose, and it has many verses in common with the law-book of Manu, particularly in regard to the divinity of the king, pretensions of the brāhmaṇas and the importance of *daṇḍa*. The *rājadharma* section is mainly didactic and seems to have been inserted in the Book of Peace some time in the first four centuries of the Christian era. It mentions the

Greeks, Śakas, and especially the Pahlavas or the Parthians who ruled in north-western India in the first century A.D., and therefore it cannot be earlier than that date. Hence it would be wrong to use its material, as has been usually done so far, for the study of the political institutions of the later Vedic or post-Vedic period. Even its treatment of the constitution and working of the *gaṇa* may not apply to post-Vedic times except in very general terms. As regards the *saptāṅga* theory, the royal functions, the composition of the council of ministers, the rules of war, the sources and principles of taxation, all these reflect the state of affairs in the early centuries of the Christian era. Speculations on the origin of kingship consti- tute the most fertile and original portion in the *rājadharma* section of the *Śānti Parva*. These provide the first reasoned brāhmaṇical justification for the royal office.

The younger epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, whose Critical Edition is not yet complete, is neither so bulky nor so useful for our study. The earliest version mentioned in some Jain and Buddhist texts of the early Christian era consisted of 12,000 verses; now it consists of 24,000 verses to which it swelled by Gupta times. What forcibly strikes about its contents is its description of a kingless (*arājaka*) state. It also tells us about the duties of the king, his officials, and other political institutions. But they appear to have been an idealised and simplified version of the Gupta political institutions.

The Purāṇas belong to the same category as the epics, and contain considerable didactic sections dwelling upon royal functions and other allied subjects. Several Purāṇas, such as the *Vāyu* and *Matsya* (also mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*), were completed by Gupta times, and furnish theoretical background to the political institutions of the period.

In recent times several theses have been written on the political ideas in the *Mahābhārata*, although none of them has been published so far. But if they follow the pattern set by Hopkins about 75 years ago in his article on the position of the ruling caste they might add a few more details but cannot advance our knowledge. Similarly the attempt to attribute the institutions known from the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the early history of Kosala or to reconstruct Rāmāyaṇic polity in a historical vacuum is misplaced. Political thought in the Purāṇas has

received some attention, but the only worthwhile exercise has been a recent work on the *Agni Puraṇa*,[1] which does not fall within the period of our study.

The Dharmasūtras, Smṛtis, epics and Purāṇas represent a tradition which is religious and out and out brāhmaṇical. A somewhat different tradition is embodied in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, which is more practical and less influenced by religious considerations. Because of its being the earliest and basic specimen of its type this text has given rise to an enormous corpus of literature. Perhaps no question in ancient India has been so hotly debated as the date and authenticity of this work. Indian scholars generally place it in the Maurya period, and European scholars four or five centuries later. But in any case there is no basis for using the *Arthaśastra* material for the pre-Maurya period.[2] The text as we have it does not seem to have been a homogeneous work written at one time and place. Although most of the book is rwritten in prose following the *sutra* style prevalent tillthe first century B.C. or so, its portions in verse were inserted later. The discussion of its style is better left to language specialists, but it would be fruitful to disentangle the various strata of the text from one another on the basis of style. As regards language the contrast between the Aśokan Prakrit and the Kauṭilyan Sanskrit is obvious. The political organisation outlined by Kauṭilya is different from the system indicated by Asoka's inscriptions. While Kauṭilya emphasises centralisation Aśoka adopts decentralisation. The typical Aśokan officials such as *mahāmātra*, *rajuka*, *prādeśika*, *prativedaka*,etc., are not mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*. *Mahāmātras* appear as the most important functionaries in Aśokan inscriptions, but only their office *mahāmātrīyam* occurs once in the *Arthaśāstra* which nowhere indicates their functions. Of course a minor Aśokan official called *yukta* is known to Kauṭilya but that does not prove much. The same holds good of the Aśokan adminis-

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1. B. B. Misra, *Polity in the Agni Purāṇa*, Calcutta, 1965.

2. This has been done in U. N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life*, II, OUP, 1966.

trative unit called *āhāra*. On the other hand many terms of fiscal and administrative import mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* appear in inscriptions, particularly in grants of the first and second centuries A.D. *Bhoga*, *praṇaya*, *viṣṭi* and *parihāra*, (and *taradeya* ?) occurring in inscriptions of the Deccan and western India find place in the *Arthaśāstra* ; of these *parihāra*, which means exemptions from taxes on the land granted to beneficiaries, is a significant term occurring frequently in Sātavāhana inscriptions. Similarly the *amātya*, who emerges as the most important functionary in Śaka and Sātavāhana epigraphs, occupies the same place in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. The epigraphic evidence would therefore suggest that Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* was finally compiled in the first century A.D.; at least several sources of revenue mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* reflect the practice prevalent in the second century A.D.

But some similarity of the royal control of economic activities noted by Megasthenes to those recommended by Kauṭilya suggests that BK II, which deals with the duties of superintendents, has some genuine Maurya touch about it; this may be also true of BKS III & IV, which deal with civil and criminal law. However, the sections which treat inter-state relations and war seem to be fairly well developed, and we do not know where to place them. Of course the term *skandhāvāra*, military camp, occupies the same prominent place in BK I of the *Arthaśāstra* as it does in Sātavāhana inscriptions.

Since all the contents of the *Arthaśāstra* do not seem to belong to the same period their summary is not of much use to the historian. Divided into 15 *adhikaraṇas* and 180 *prakaraṇas* it embraces almost all subjects such as economics, sociology, politics, etc. However, the major portion is devoted to the problems of administration. It deals with the seven elements of the kingdom, training, duties and vices of the king, recruitment and duties of the *amātyas* and *manrins*, civil and criminal administration, guilds and corporations. Republics form the theme of one whole chapter. Further, the text enunciates the principles of inter-state relations and describes the military organisation. It suggests methods to win wars and acquire popularity in the conquered territories. But the most distinguishing feature of its contents is the exaltation of the royal

power and the assignment of many social and economic functions to the king.

On the basis of its contents the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya cannot be regarded as a text-book of political science in the modern sense of the term. It is not exactly of the same type as the *Republic* of Plato or the *Politics* of Aristotle. Its practical character shows that it is closer to the latter. Just as the two Greek classics are not exclusive works on political science, so also is the case with the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. But undoubtedly a good part of the work is concerned with politics. And what is further important is that Kauṭilya makes a deliberate and conscious attempt to free politics from the influence of religion and morality. Indeed he goes against these principles to achieve political objectives.

Thus the *Arthaśāstra* is not only a treatise on the science of wealth as its name indicates but also a treatise on political science called *daṇḍanīti*. Kauṭilya quotes from five schools and thirteen individual writers, which shows that this branch was quite well established in his time. Some of these authors are also mentioned in the *Śānti Parva*. It is a pity that the works of the predecessors of Kauṭilya have not been discovered so far, and the few fragments attributed to them by Kauṭilya are too inadequate to form a clear picture of political beliefs in pre-Kauṭilyan times.[1]

Kauṭilya's immediate successors are unknown, but he had quite a few in early mediaeval times which does not fall within the scope of the present study. We might however mention the *Kāmandaka Nītisāra* compiled around A.D. 800. Kāmandaka clearly acknowledges his debt to Kauṭilya, whose material he digests in a systematic manner so that this borrowing appears better organised than its source. Repetitions of Kauṭilya's views merely suggest that his school continued to enjoy authority and influence in later times, but for new developments in the period of Kāmandaka we will have to take note of the variants occurring in his text. Some of these relate to the army and inter-state relations.

The second *Nītisāra*, that of Śukra, has been heavily drawn

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1. This has been attempted in U.N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, Ch. V.

upon by modern writers[1] with consequent increase in the size of their text-books on early Indian polity. But in view of convincing argumens supporting the early 19th century compilation of this text[2] this temptation will have to be resisted.

For whom was the literature on polity meant ? Surely not for the common people, and not even for members of priestly class who might have produced it. The prevalent form of government being monarchy, texts on polity were written for the instruction and training of the princes in the art of government. Kauṭilya has a whole section on the education of the prince, just as the whole scheme of Plato's education in the *Republic* is meant for members of the guardian class. Kāmandaka states that his book is addressed to the king (*bhumīśvaraṃ prati*).

Since the Dharmaśāstra literature was produced to cover *dharma*, and the Arthaśāstra to cover *artha* it is natural to look for differences between the two schools. The Dharmaśāstra generally tends to exalt the authority of the brāhmaṇas and lays stress on rules which govern both the social and political order. On the other hand the Arhaśāstra seems to exalt the authority of the king and emphasises the rules which govern the political and economic structure. The first type of literature sounds theoretical; the second appears to be practical. But beyond this it is not possible to exaggerate the divergence between the two, for both share a common outlook and ideology regarding the varṇa-divided society and represent the king as its upholder.

As regards the nature of contents on polity and political ideas the early Pāli canonical texts present a somewhat different picture. Although they took final shape in Ceylon in the first century B.C. their references to monarchies and republics probably look back upon affairs in Magadha and Kosala in the age of the Buddha. This is perhaps true of the situation of the various states and their mutual relations. But allusions to their internal constitutions will have to be taken with a grain of salt. The *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga* portions of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, or Book of Discipline, provide rich data on the

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1. An important example is A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*.

2. Lallanji Gopal, *BSOAS*, xxx.

organisation of the Buddhist church. It is argued that the rules and regulations which governed the conduct of the monks collectively were adopted from the republican states of the time of the Buddha. Reasonable as this hypothesis may appear, we have to find out how far the original rules were modified, and adjusted to the needs of a religious organisation.

Unless we take recourse to Greek accounts and Pānini we do not have any firmly dated contemporary sources for the study of republican institutions in pre-Maurya times. The Jātakas, Buddhist birth stories, on the basis of which the Licchavi constitution is constructed, in their present form are not older than the second century B. C. Primarily folktales, they speak of the duties of the king, administration of justice, varṇas and *jātis* and economic activities. There could be some justification for using their narrative portion for an earlier period, but certainly not for reconstructing the Śākya constitution on the basis of the commentaries compiled in Ceylon in the 5th century A.D. As in the case of the Dharmaśāstra literature a line will have to be drawn between the structure embodied in the early texts and the superstructure raised by the later commentators.

The *Dīgha Nikāya*, containing the teachings of the Buddha, gives the earliest systematic speculations regarding the origin of the kingship or the state and of the social orders. This appears as a part of the story of the creation in the *Ambaṭṭhasutta*. The whole text may be placed in the third century B.C., and shows that systematic theories of the origin of the state were propounded only when the state had become a well-established institution. Later Buddhist texts such as the *Mahāvastu*, ascribable to the first century B.C. and written in hybrid-Sanskrit, embellish, and add to, the original story of the origin of kingship, but the nucleus remains unaltered.

The Jain Prākrit texts, finally compiled in Valabhī in the sixth century A.D., embody some useful material, but its chronological order is far from settled. Some of the earliest doctrinal texts, such as the *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, contain the oldest part of the Jain canon from the linguistic and literary points of view. Their poems containing parables, similies and dialogues have their parallels in the Jātakas and the *Śānti Parva*. In this type of literature we may pick up incidental references

to the system of administration. The Jain Purāṇas compiled in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. narrate the story of creation, which conjectures about the origin of the state and the castes; especially the picture of pre-state society is fairly detailed in these works. However, the material supplied by the Jain Prakrit works has not found any place in modern text-books on early Indian polity. The only Jain text which has been used so far for this purpose is the *Nītivākyāmṛta* by a Jain author Somadeva Sūri, who wrote it in Sanskrit in the 10th century A.D. But it is heavily indebted to earlier brāhmaṇical texts from which it quotes generously. Nevertheless, it belongs to the series on *Nītisāra* and as a text on polity can be profitably used for the early mediaeval period.

A survey of indigenous literary sources might include Pāṇini's grammar of about the 5th century B.C. and Patañjali's commentary of about the second century B.C. The first is valuable for grammatical illustrations referring to contemporary republics, and the second for sidelights on the mode of administration in post-Maurya times. A similar use can also be made of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira for the Gupta period. But references from books on grammar and astronomy or astrology cannot form the basis for the study of the polity of any period; they can only supplement our knowledge.

The native literary source-material presents several difficulties. First, all of these, especially the Jain texts, are not critically edited; so the danger of being misled by interpolations is always there. Secondly, they are mostly didactic which makes it difficult to find out the real position about the system of administration although they reflect political ideas and theories. Thirdly, even in the case of texts such as the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya we do not feel sure of the time and place to which they belong. None the less, by and large, ancient native literary sources provide the theoretical aspect of ancient political institutions.

The practical aspect is provided by the study of the archaeological background, and of coins and inscriptions, which are comparatively free from the disadvantages enumerated above. Apparently the archaeology of a region and period can be only remotely linked up with its political structure. But the discovery of settled rural communities or

of the urban complex can certainly do something to check the inferences drawn from literary sources assuming large and efficient imperial organisation. Further, evidence of the existence of towns on a large scale in a period would point to the need for urban administration.

The earliest Indian coins, called the punch-marked and ascribed to the sixth century B.C., do not help the study of polity much. But from the post-Maurya period coins become useful for our purpose. The titles of kings mentioned on the Kuṣāṇa coins shed some light on the royal office, and especially on its divine aspects. Representation of Śiva on many Kuṣāṇa coins lay bare the connection between religion and politics. Coins show that some of the states were dedicated to gods, as for instance the state of the Kuṇīndas. Some contemporary coins do not mention the names of the kings but of the tribes or the peoples such as Mālavas and Yaudheyas, which suggests that these were republican states. The Gupta coins do not disclose much information; still some titles and legends occurring on them enable us to determine the nature of kingship and administration. Evidently on account of lack of space much material cannot be put on the coins, but whatever little occurs there is important for administrative history.

What is provided by the coins on a very small scale is done by inscriptions on a huge scale. The first Indian inscriptions to be deciphered are those of Aśoka. Engraved on rocks and pillars generally in Prakrit language and Brāhmī character throughout the length and breadth of his empire, these are royal commands or proclamations for regulating social, religious and administrative behaviour. Many of these edicts are called *dharma* inscriptions, but they do not deal with what would be regarded as purely religious matters. On the other hand they are mainly concerned with such questions as the relation between the king and the *parisā* (*pariṣad*), judicial administration, the functions of high royal officers such as the *rājukas* and *mahāmātras*, and the paternal ideal of kingship. Although most Aśokan officials are not mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, the broad fact about the comprehensive state control suggested by Megasthenes and Kauṭilya is generally corroborated by records issued by Aśoka in the early part of his reign.

The post-Mauryan and Gupta inscriptions fall into two wide categories, private and official. Private inscriptions are mainly donation records which, though short, generally describe the official position of the donors. Written in both Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī these records throw welcome sidelights on the administrative machinery of the period.

Official inscriptions include a few eulogistic records called *praśastis*, but generally land charters, which again are donation records. The former celebrate the all-round achievements of the princes, their victories, their endowments, etc. To this category belong the Hathigumpha Inscription of Khāravela and the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta. The first records the events of Kharavela's reign year by year and speaks of his education, coronation, and favours showered upon the urban and rural population (*paura-jānapada*). The second enlightens us about the relation between Samudra Gupta and the various categories of the conquered princes and peoples who were treated as vassals and tributaries.

But by far the most important class of the official inscriptions are the land charters which were first issued by the Sātavāhanas in the first century A.D. The process continued on a large scale down to the 13th-14th centuries, from when it began to be undermined by the Turkish Muslim conquest and by the introduction of paper. Although mostly religious, the contents of these grants vary from period to period and region to region. These grants often mention the fiscal and administrative units, enumerate the sources of revenue, and also the officers who were informed of the land donations. The royal proclamations of Aśoka are addressed only to one or two functionaries consisting of the provincial governor called *kumāra* or the *āryaputra* and of the high officials called *mahāmātras*. The Sātavāhana royal charters are invariably addressed to the *amātyas*. But from the Gupta period onwards the number of officers mentioned in the land charters goes on steadily multiplying till it counts nearly three dozen in the Pāla land characters of early mediaeval times. Of course the fiscal and administrative terms used in inscriptions baffle attempts at easy interpretation, but from the first century A.D. onwards they are our only sure guide to the system of taxation and administration. If Gupta inscriptions are read along with the

Smṛtis of the period, they give us a fairly good picture of the Gupta polity.

Even when not dated, inscriptions can be placed within narrow chronological brackets on palaeographic grounds, and hence their value for the study of the ancient polity is far greater than that of the law-books. The technical epigraphic terms of fiscal and administrative import can very well help determine the dates of the various strata of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, of the Dharmaśāstra and allied literature. Some of these terms such as *praṇaya*, *viṣṭi*, *hiraṇya*, *parihāra*, *dīnāra*, *sāndhivigrahika*, *karaṇika*, etc., may be treated as test expressions, and the literary texts in which they figure may be regarded as closer to the period of the corresponding inscriptions. Although the *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* by D. C. Sircar does not always indicate the first occurrence and the precise location of such terms, it is a handy and useful compendium for tracing them. If the *History of Dharmaśāstra* by P. V. Kane, and the *Dharmakośa* by L. S. Joshi are consulted in coordination with the *Glossary*, it will help to remove the gap between the two important sources for the study of early Indian polity.

The present survey will not be complete without some reference to Greek and Chinese accounts, which embody valuable data on the system of administration. Historians of Alexander the Great, who was not considered important enough to be mentioned in any contemporary or even later ancient Indian source, have left detailed accounts of his Indian compaigns (327-325 B.C.), some describing the internal constitutions of the states which faced him in the Panjab and Sind. Although Greek writers show a tendency to read city-state constitution in some of these states, without doubt several republics flourished in north-western India in the 4th century B.C. But for the study of the Maurya system of administration the account of Megasthenes, who lived as an ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya at Pāṭaliputra, is invaluable. Although his *Indika* has not been recovered so far and the fragments quoted by later authors are not always considered reliable by classical writers such as Arrian, his is the only account that can be firmly dated. Since the dating of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya is not free from doubt the citations from Megasthenes form our only definite and direct source for

the administration of the founder of the Maurya empire. They describe the daily routine of the king, the main functions of councillors, and also of magistrates controlling irrigation and other activities. They also outline the municipal administration of Pāṭaliputra and the military organisation of the empire, and they record the tradition about the fall of monarchies and the rise of democratic states The Greek and Latin accounts of the post-Maurya period are mainly useful for economic history.

The Chinese accounts are helpful for the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. Although both Fa-hsien and Hsüan Tsang were primarily interested in the fortunes of Buddhism in India they notice a few facts about administration. Fa-hsien, who visited India in A.D. 399-414 in the reign of Candra Gupta II, speaks of the system of government in Madhyadeśa or U. P. and western Bihar. He also mentions the mode of payment to the attendants and bodyguards of the king. But this Chinese traveller does not in any way refer directly to the Gupta king or his empire, as Hsüan Tsang does in the case of Harṣavardhana. The account of Hsüan Tsang, who visited India in A.D. 629-641, is more detailed and specific. He speaks in glowing terms of the system of government set up by his patron and gives exaggerated figures about his military strength. But all the same Hsüan Tsang is the only important source from which we get an idea of the fiscal and military systems of Harṣa.

Indian scholars, most of whom do not know Greek or Chinese, have to depend on English translations which are now a century old and hence badly in need of revision. The crucial passages in Greek accounts relating to the ownership of land or royal share of produce have been variously rendered. Similarly Fa-hsien's passage on the mode of payment to officials has been translated in three different ways. So in all such cases the exact translation will have to be settled. We have also to consider the intellectual horizon of the Greek and Chinese writers who tended to project the administrative practices of their respective countries on to the Indian system and also of the 19th century translators and introduction writers who did not have the advantage of the Indological knowledge that has accumulated since then.

Governmental practices in native Hindu states recorded

by census superintendents, anthropologists, missionaries and others in the 19th or even in the early 20th century may be of some use in interpreting the measures recommended by the Dharmaśāstra. Since India has been a country of long survivals some ancient customs have managed to continue till recent times. A typical example is the practice of settling caste promotions and demotions by the Hindu kings in Nepal and Orissa, which reminds us of the Dharmaśāstra rule that the king is the upholder of the system, and, according to the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, even its promulgator. Some of the old administrative titles and terms such as amātya, nāyaka, sāmanta, chaudhuri (from *caurodharaṇika*), mahāpātra, daṇḍausī (from *daṇḍapāśika*), koṭhārī (from *koṣṭhāgārika*), veṭh (from *viṣṭi*), etc., still current particularly in the outlying provinces where the Indo-Persian system of administration did not make any serious impact, are as old as Gupta times if not earlier. Some knowledge of the family traditions of the holders of these titles might give hints of original functions assigned to them.

Our survey will show that students of ancient Indian political ideas and institutions have not to bother so much about the dearth of material as about its indifferent and unreliable nature. Unfortunately much of the original stuff has been taken for granted although in many cases its time, place and authenticity are riddled with uncertainties. This is true of literary texts, and it substantially alters the picture if the Brāhmaṇas are placed before 1000 B.C., the whole of the *Mahābhārata* is used for pre-Maurya times and the *Śukranītisāra* for the period A.D. 600-1200.[1] We cannot get a clear idea of development in political thought and administration unless we attempt a periodwise coordination between the literary and the epigraphic sources. But before this is done the typical portion of a text or an inscription will have to be determined. While it is easy to locate the typical part of an inscription by weeding out the preamble and the conventional, it is difficult to find out what is typical of a Smṛti, Purāṇa or a Nītiśāstra, for most of these are compendia quoting profusely and indiscriminately from earlier texts. Unless the typical in such texts

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1. This has been generally done in Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*.

is isolated—as has been done in the case of the *Agni Purāṇa*—students of polity would not be able to put them to any critical use. Finally, we want to stress the obvious that native literary texts can be mainly used for the history of political theories. But the system of administration can be reconstructed in the first place from coins and inscriptions, in the second from foreign accounts; and in the last from survivals in modern times.

Chapter III

THE SAPTĀṄGA THEORY OF THE STATE

Despite considerable theorising in regard to rituals in the later Vedic collections and the Brāhmaṇas, we do not find any definition of the state either in this literature or in the early law-books, the Dharmasūtras. This was due to the fact that this institution was not established on a firm footing so far. It is only after the rise of the well-organised states of Kosala and Magadha in the age of the Buddha that the state is defined for the first time in the *Ārthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya as consisting of seven elements, a definition which becomes an axiom in the later sources. The *Sarasvatīvilāsa*, a text of the 16th century A. D.[1], ascribes the seven-element definition to Gautama from whom it quotes[2], but this cannot be traced in his law-book. Besides, as has been shown by the present writer elsewhere, this work seems to have been much tampered with and therefore compiled at a later date.[3] Although some elements such as *rājā*, *amātya*, *viṣaya*, etc., are mentioned in some early Dharmasūtras, it is for the first time in Kauṭilya that we get the complete definition of the state.

The seven elements enumerated by Kauṭilya are *svāmī*, *amātya*, *janapada*, *durga*, *kośa*, *daṇḍa* and *mitra*.[4] These seven elements are mentioned in most texts dealing with polity[5], although in some cases the synonyms of some elements differ. The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, a work of about the fifth century A.D.[6], however, mentions two new elements *sāma* (pacification) and *dāna* (charity) respectively in place of *svāmī* and *amātya*.[7]

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1. Kane, *Hist. Dhs.*, i, 413.
2. Ibid., iii, 17 fn. 20.
3. *Śūdras*, pp. 83-84.
4. *AŚ*, VI. 1.
5. *Manu*, IX. 294; *ŚP*, 69. 62-3, the term used in the constituted text is *saptātmakaṃ rājyam*; *Viṣṇu*, III. 33; *Yāj.*, I. 353; *ŚNS*, i, 61; *Agni Purāṇa* quoted in Jagdish Lal Shastri, *Pol. Thought in the Purāṇas*, p. 48, *Mārk. P.* quoted op. cit., p. 23; *Kālikā P.* quoted op. cit., p. 115.
6. R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, i. 212.
7. Extract quoted in Shastri, op. cit., p. 163.

Perhaps we can explain this variation in the context of inter-state relations in which this statement is made. Apparently the two elements fit ill with the other, and there is no doubt that the seven-element definition of the state as given by Kauṭilya was almost universally accepted as the standard connotation of the state. Even the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* reproduces this definition at another place.[1] A difference, however, is found in some manuscripts of the *Śānti Parva*, which uses the term *aṣṭāṅgika rājya* (eight-element state) in the critical edition,[2] but the eighth element is not mentioned anywhere.

Of the seven elements the *Arthaśāstra* does not define *amātya* and *durga* in the section where it deals with all the other elements; these two are treated separately. But on the whole the treatment of the seven elements in this text is thorough and systematic, and we have no parallel to this in other texts. As we will notice, the subsequent texts have something different to say on the mutual relations of these elements, otherwise they do not add anything of substance to the Kauṭilyan definition. Hence for the analysis of the seven elements we have to fall back on Kauṭilya.

Svāmī, which means head or master, is mentioned as such by all the sources.[3] Perhaps it refers to the element of headship in both monarchies and republics, for in discussing the calamities affecting the *rājā* Kauṭilya mentions the weakness of *vairājya*, non-monarchical state.[4] For the first time the term *svāmī* is used in the Śaka inscriptions. It is significant that for the head of the state none of the texts uses the term *rājā* which literally means noble or ruler; rather they prefer the term *svāmī*[5], which means master. Nevertheless, since the term is first used by Kauṭilya, its significance may better be appreciated with reference to his other ideas. The intention is to stress the sense of possession exercised by the head, who occupies a very exalted position in the scheme of Kauṭilya. Kauṭilya dilates at some length on the qualities requisite

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1. Ibid., p. 153.
2. 122. 8.
3. *AŚ*, VI. 1; *Manu*, IX. 294; *Viṣṇu*, III, 33; *ŚP*, 69. 62-63; *Yāj.*, I. 353.
4. *AŚ*, VIII. 2.
5. *ŚP*, 69.62, however, uses the term *ātmā* which stands for *rājā*.

for the *svāmī*. In his opinion the *svāmī* should be endowed with qualities flowing from noble birth, wisdom, enthusiasm and personal ability.[1] The qualities of noble birth deserve special mention, for this does not envisage the possibility of men of humble origins being raised to kingship.

The second element *amātya* is also mentioned as such in all the texts. The usual translation of *amātya* as minister may convey the wrong impression that they were intended to act as ministers, whose number was small. But even in a later text such as the *Śānti Parva* the number of the *amātyas* is put at thirty-seven, and they are distinguished from the *mantrins* whose number is prescribed at eight.[2] In the *Arthaśāstra* the *amātyas* constitute a regular cadre of service from which all high officers such as the chief priest, ministers, collectors, treasures, officers engaged in civil and criminal administration, officers in charge of harem, envoys and the superintendents of various departments are to be recruited.[3]

When Kauṭilya thinks of a council of *amātyas*, he bears in mind the distinction between the *mantrins* and the *amātyas*. In the case of the former he puts the limit at three or four, but in the case of the latter he states that their number should depend upon the capacity to employ them.[4] In stating the requisite qualifications of the *amātyas*, Kauṭilya advises that all can be appointed *amātyas* in deference to the needs of time, place and work, but this formula cannot apply to the *mantrins*.[5] Here he quotes the views of seven thinkers, two of whom prefer claims based on hereditary posts and qualities of noble birth.[6]

Since the *amātya* of Kauṭilya is identical with the Pāli *amacca*, we can better appreciate his position and functions on the basis of the early Pāli texts. The Jātakas show that the *amātyas* were employed in hundreds, acting as village headmen, supervisors of sale transactions, judges, guides in worldly and

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1. *abhigāmikā guṇāḥ*, *prajñā guṇāḥ*, *utsāhaguāḥ* and *ātmasampat*. *AŚ*, VI. 1.
2. The passage, which provides for a body of 36 *amātyas*, occurs in the Calcutta edition (*ŚP*., 85. 7-11), and not in the critical edn. which refers only to eight *mantrins* (*ŚP*., 85. 7-10).
3. I. 9-10, 16.
4. Ibid.
5. *AŚ*, I. 8.
6. Kauṇapadanta and Bāhudantiputra, Ibid.

spiritual matters, surveyors, etc.[1] Most references show that *amaccas* were appointed to act as judges and magistrates to administer law-suits (*vohāra*) and trials (*viniccaya*).[2] The suggestion that they formed a class of knights[3] is hardly supported by early Buddhist texts; on the other hand they seem to have been commonly officers of a general nature rather than ministers or knights. In the beginning they seem to have been the friends, companions and courtiers of the king, probably related to him. But gradually they became his officers, which development perhaps began in pre-Maurya times and crystallized in Maurya times. Kauṭilya's view of the *amātyas* is almost compatible with their position in the Jātakas. He assigns them agricultural operations, fortifications, welfare of the territory, prevention of adversities, punishment of the criminals, collection of royal dues, etc.[4] Thus it would appear that the *amātyas* stand for the governmental machinery. Kāmandaka also takes the *amātyas* in a generic sense, but he seems to identify them with the *sacivas* for in laying down qualifications the two terms are used without any discrimination.[5] The *amātyas* are however, different from the *mantrins*, who are charged with the duty of advising the king and safeguarding the counsel (*mantra*).[6] The difference between the two is clearly brought out in a passage, which states that the king, living in his capital, equipped with treasury and army, should think of the good of his kingdom together with his *mantrins* and *amātyas*.[7] In post-Maurya times *amātyas* were known as *sacivas*, and, as would appear from the use of the terms *mati-saciva* and *karma-saciva* in the inscription of Rudradāman[8], formed a general cadre of officers from amongst whom high functionaries were recruited.

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1. Fick, *Social Organisation of North-Eastern India*, pp. 144-49.
2. *Jat.*, ii, 2, 181; iii, 105; v. 228.
3. R. N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 136.
4. *janapadasya karmasiddhayaḥ svataḥ parataśca yogakṣemasādhanaṃ vyasanapratīkāraḥ śūnyaniveśopacayau daṇḍakarānugrahaśceti. AŚ*, VIII. 1.
5. *KNS*, IV. 25-27, 34.
6. Ibid., 30-31.
7. Ibid., VIII. 1.
8. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 67, l. 17.

The third element *janapada*, which literally means tribal settlement, is mentioned as *rāṣṭra* in two post-Maurya texts[1] and as simply *jana* in a law-book of the Gupta period.[2] The term *rāṣṭra* clearly conveys the meaning of territory,but *jana* certainly means population. The nature of *janapada* defined in the *Artha-śāstra* indicates that both territory and population are intended to be covered by this expression. It is said that the territory should have a good climate, should provide grazable land for cattle and should yield grain with little labour. Further, it should be inhabited by industrious peasants who are capable of bearing the burden of taxes and punishments. Finally, it should contain intelligent masters and be predominantly populated by members of the lower classes, and its people should be loyal and devoted.[3] Kāmandaka amplifies this statement by adding that the territory should be inhabited by śūdras, artisans, traders and hard-working and enterprising peasants.[4] Two Purāṇas of the Gupta period state that the king should live in a country which is mostly populated by vaiśyas and śūdras, a few brāhmaṇas but many hired labourers. Thus all the sources, which indicate the nature of population, emphasise that it should mainly consist of the producing masses.[5] Usually they do not prescribe the size of the territory or the number of population, although in connection with the settlement of the new territories Kauṭilya states that the village should comprise one hundred to five hundred families, and that the *sthānīya*, which is the largest unit in the *janapada*, should consist of eight hundred villages.[6]

The fourth element mentioned by Kauṭilya is *durga*, which is called *pura* in Manu and occupies the third place there;[7] The

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1. *Manu*, IX. 294; *Viṣṇu*, III. 33. *ŚP*, 69, 62-63, where the *saptāṅga* state is defined, uses the term *janapada*, but in another context, where all the other six elements are mentioned (*ŚP*, 60. 3-4), the term *rāṣṭra* is used. Kāmandaka sometimes uses the term *rāṣṭra* (IV. 50).

2. *Yāj.*, I. 353.

3. *daṇḍakarasahaḥ karmaśīlakarṣako'bāliśasvāmyavaravarṇaprāyo bhakti-śucimanuṣya iti janapadasampat. AŚ*, VI. 1.

4. *śūdrakāruvaṇikprāyo mahārambhakṛṣībalaḥ*.IV. 54. This passage is literally reproduced in the *Agni Purāṇa*, 239. 26.

5. *vaiśyaśūdrajanaprāyamanāhāryaṃ tathā paraiḥ, kiñcidbrāhmaṇasaṃyuktaṃ bahukarmakaraṃ tathā. Matsya P.* quoted on p. 11 and *Viṣṇudharmottara P.* on p. 139 of J. L. Shastri, op. cit. This passage is literally reproduced in the *Agni P.* 222. 1-2. Cf. *Mārk, P.*, 49. 47.

6. *AŚ*. II. 1.

7. IX. 294. It is also called *pura* in *ŚP*, 69. 63.

expression *durga* is understood in the sense of fortress.[1] But as a synonym of *pura*, it should be understood in the sense of fortified capital, which meaning can also be inferred from the two independent sections *durgavidhāna* and *durganiveśa* provided by Kauṭilya. The first refers to the construction of fortresses[2], and the second to the planning and layout of the capital.[3] The distinction between the *janapada* and the *pura* seems to have been made out in the *Śānti Parva*, the former indicating the countryside and the latter the capital.[4] The section on *durganiveśa* specifies the characteristics of a *durga*, referred to by Kauṭilya when he discusses the features of other elements[5]. In the planning of the capital, which is to be built at a central place, areas are to be set apart for members of the different varṇas and for artisans as well as gods.[6] It is to be noticed that artisans such as those dealing with wool, thread, bamboo, hide, weapons, etc., workers in metal and gems, and the various guilds are especially mentioned in this connection.[7] Thus the artisan class is considered valuable, probably because of its use for defence.

Kośa or treasury appears as the fifth element in Kauṭilya and other sources. According to Kauṭilya the treasure accumulated by righteous and legitimate means should be retained by the king or should be amassed by him in the same manner.[8] Filled with gold, silver, precious jewels and gems, the treasury should be able to stand the strain of expenditure during times of adversity, such as famines, etc.[9] Kauṭilya states that without treasury it is not possible to maintain the army and to keep it loyal.[10] This is a clear recognition of the vital link between the two elements of the state, although he also makes a broader assertion that all activities depend upon finance.[11]

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1. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 44.
2. *AŚ*, II. 3.
3. Ibid., II. 4.
4. *ŚP*, 69. 63.
5. *AŚ*, VI. 1.
6. Ibid., II. 4.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., VI. 1.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., VIII. 1.
11. Ibid.

Daṇḍa, or coercive power mainly in the form of army, is mentioned as the sixth element, and is sometimes bracketed with *kośa*.[1] This element consists, according to Kauṭilya, of hereditary, hired, forest and corporation soldiers comprising infantry, chariots, elephants and cavalry. But in treating the subject of *daṇḍa* the *Śānti Parva* states that the army comprises elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, boats, forced labour, indigenous and hired soldiers, and therefore describes it as *aṣṭāṅga bala*.[2] The characteristics of *daṇḍa* are enumerated by Kauṭilya at several places. Kṣatriyas are considered as the most excellent material for the army,[3] which suits the function of fighting assigned to them by all brāhmaṇical and Buddhist texts. In times of emergency Manu allows the brāhmaṇas and vaiśyas to bear arms but not the śūdras.[4] Kauṭilya, however, recommends the enlistment of vaiśyas and śūdras into the army on considerations of their numerical strength.[5] Besides, according to him the army should be hereditary and loyal; their sons and wives should be contented with the maintenance received from the state; they should be equipped with all the necessary provisions at the time of invasion; they should be invincible, patient, skilled in work, indifferent to losses and gains, and should act as desired by the king.[6]

The seventh and the last element mentioned by Kauṭilya is *mitra*, who is also known as *suhṛt* in several other texts. According to Kauṭilya the ally should be hereditary, not artificial, one with whom there is no possibility of rupture and one who is ready to come to help when occasion demands it.[7] In contrast the enemy is defined as one who is greedy, unjust, licentious, evildoer, etc.[8]

The definition of the state, as stated above, is still more exclusively the product of brāhmaṇical school than the contract

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1. *KNS*, VIII. 1.
2. *ŚP*, 121. 43.
3. *AŚ*, VI. 1.
4. VIII. 348.
5. *AŚ*, IX. 2.
6. Ibid., VI. 1.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

theory is the product of the Buddhist school, for the latter nowhere refers to the *saptāṅga* theory of the state. In the Buddhist view taxes form the only distinctive feature of the state. Here we may quote from a Buddhist source, which is ascribed to the Maurya period. "And whoever among men gets his rents from village or lands know this, O Vāseṭṭha—is a king and no brāhmaṇa."[1] This statement suggests the importance of *kośa* to the *rājan*, but the other five elements are not mentioned.

Whatever may be the deficiency in the Buddhist school, the definition of the (state) *rājya*, which literally means the act of ruling or sovereignty, must be regarded as a unique contribution of the early Indian thought to the history of political theory. Although Plato and Aristotle speculate on the origin of the state, they never define it as sharply and clearly as the case with early Indian thinkers. In this sense Kauṭilya furnishes us as full and complete a definition of the state as was possible in ancient times. The Greek thinkers hardly discuss the constituent elements of the state. Plato makes some attempt at this in the *Republic*. His philosopher may be campared to the *svāmī*, his warriors to the *daṇḍa*, and his artisans and husbandmen in some measure to the *janapada*. Aristotle gives the impression that the households and citizens constitute the state, and in laying down the material conditions of his ideal state he fixes the size of the city and the limit of population. But none of these gives as full a definition of the state as is found in Kauṭilya. Keith complains that it would be melancholy if the *Ārthaśāstra* were the best that India could show as against the *Republic* of Plato or the *Politics* of Aristotle[2], but in respect of the definition of the state there is no basis for such a criticism; on the contrary Kauṭilya surpasses the Greek philosophers in this field.

It has been generally recognised that the modern constituents of the state such as sovereignty, government, territory and population are covered respectively by the elements of *svāmī*, *amātya* and *janapada* in the *saptāṅga* theory of the state.

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1. *yo hi koci manussesu gāmaṃ raṭṭañ ca bhuñjati evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi, rājā eso, na brāhmaṇo. Sutta Nipāta*, no. 619.

2. *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Preface, p. xviii.

Perhaps it is difficult to identify sovereignty with the head, who is required by the lawgivers to govern according to the canons of *dharma*. But there can be no doubt about the identification of the other elements. We may add that in modern times unless a state receives the recognition of other states, its *de jure* status is not established. Perhaps this element in the modern state may be compared to *mitra* (ally), although the object in ancient times was to secure allies and not recognition from other states. It is said that population does not find any place in the *saptāṅga* theory because it was too evident to be mentioned.[1] But, as has been shown earlier, at least in one text *jana* or population is unequivocally mentioned as an element in the structure of the state.[2] In other texts the term *janapada* clearly stands for inhabited territory. On the contrary there is no place for army, taxation, capital and ally in the modern definition of the state. Perhaps the elements of army and taxation are covered by the concept of sovereign power, which exercises the function of coercion and tax-collection. Since these ingredients are not clearly mentioned in the modern definition, it sounds to be abstract in contrast to the ancient definition, which was concrete and eminently practical. In the ancient definition no attempt was made to cover the reality by the use of abstruse phrase, which often obscures the real meaning.

In so far as the practical and concrete nature of the state is concerned, its ancient Indian definition is strikingly similar in several respects to the definition of the state set forth by Engels, who emphasises the class character of the state. In his opinion public officials, who are divorced from society and who compel obedience from the people by means of exceptional laws, form an organ of the state.[3] The officials, who are looked upon as organs of society standing over society[4], may be compared to the *amātyas*, represented as a class of nobles from whom high officers of the government are to be recruited. As has been shown elsewhere, according to the brāhmaṇical law-books there is hardly any scope for the recruitment of high functionaries from the common people.[5]

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1. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 45.
2. *Yāj*, I. 353.
3. *Origin of Family, Property and State*, p. 244.
4. Ibid.
5. Infra, Ch XII

Another organ of the state, according to Engels, is a public power distinct from the mass of the people.[1] This is composed not only of armed men, but also of material accessories such as prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile society knows nothing.[2] The counterpart of this public power in the ancient Indian definition is *daṇḍa*, which, as noticed earlier, could be wielded normally by the kṣatriyas and in exceptional circumstances by members of the other varṇas. Kauṭilya's view that the territory inhabited by the armed people should be considered defective clearly implies that the people should be kept disarmed. Megasthenes informs us that peasants, who formed the bulk of population, had nothing to do with arms, which were borne by the members of the fighting class.[3]

Further, according to Engels, in order to maintain this public power, contributions from citizens become necessary, giving rise to taxes.[4] This may be compared to the *kośa*, without which, in the opinion of Kauṭilya, the army cannot be maintained. Thus at least in three respects there is remarkable similarity between the Kauṭilyan and the Marxist conception of the state. This is because both schools stress that theory should reflect practice. They come to grips with the realities of political life and are not lost in the clap-trap of empty forms.

Kauṭilya's only departure from reality seems to be in excluding the priest from the organs of the state. The priest, who plays an important part in later Vedic polity and enjoys a weighty position in the law-books and even in the work of Kauṭilya, does not find place in the elements of the state. This is taken as Kauṭilya's distinct service to the cause of political theory.[5] But in his chapter on the description of the seven elements of the state Kāmandaka lays down the qualifications of the chief priest (*purohita*) and astrologer (*jyotiṣī*)

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1. *Origin of Family, Property and State*, p. 244.
2. Ibid., pp. 242-43.
3. *Megasthenes*, XXXIII. McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 83-85.
4. Engels, op. cit., p. 243.
5. Ghoshal, *Hindu Political Theories*, p. 88.

immediately after those of the *mantrins*,[1] showing thereby that these two occupy the most important position among the *mantrins* who in their turn enjoy the same status among the *sacivas* or *amātyas*. Much cannot be made of the omission of the priest from the *saptāṅga* list, for the brāhmaṇas as a class seem to have been covered by *amātya*, kṣatriyas by *daṇḍa*, and the vaiśya and the rest of the folk by the terms *pura* and *rāṣṭra*.[2] The priest continues to hold an important position in later times, for in the *Śānti Parva* the *ṛtvik*, *purohita* and *ācārya* are mentioned along with the *rāṣṭra*, *rājā*, *kośa*, *daṇḍa*, *durga* and *mantrins*. In this text the question is asked : what leads to the prosperity of the king and kingdom, city people and servants, and how the king should deal with treasury, army, capital, ministers, priests and teachers.[3]

An important theoretical contribution made by Kauṭilya in connection with the discussion of the seven elements of the state is his exposition of the nature of calamities affecting the various *prakṛtis*. He quotes the view of some unnamed teacher, in whose opinion, of the calamities affecting the *svāmī* *amātya*, *janapada*, *durga*, *kośa*, *daṇḍa* and *mitra*, the calamity of each preceding one is more serious than that of the one immediately following. He also quotes the opinion of those teachers who think that the calamity befalling the succeeding element is more serious than the calamity befalling the preceding one. Kauṭilya upholds the first view, which means that the calamity affecting the *svāmī* is more important than that affecting the *amātya*, the one affecting the *amātya* is more important than that affecting the *janapada* and so on.[4] This, as will be shown presently, enables us to find out the relative importance of various elements according to Kauṭilya. But what is more important, in this connection Kauṭilya throws light on the nature of calamities affecting the king, territory, capital, treasury, army and ally. The king may be addicted to wine drinking, gambling or women; he may thus fall a prey to moral diseases.

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1. IV. 31-34
2. Hopkins, *Mutual Relation of the Four Castes in Manu*, pp. 11-12.
3. *kena svid vardhate rāṣṭraṃ rājā kena vivardhate, kena paurāśca bhṛtyāśca vardhante bharatarṣabha. kośaṃ daṇḍaṃ ca durgaṃ ca sahāyānmantriṇastathā ṛtvikpurohitācāryān kīdṛśān varjayennṛpaḥ. ŚP*, 60. 3-4.
4. *AŚ*, VIII. 1.

The weakness of the territory lies in its being mainly inhabited by armed people, and that of the capital in its being mainly inhabited by agriculturists.[1] Kauṭilya also states that the people (*prakṛti*) may be weakened by quarrels amongst themselves, but this may be ended by arresting the leaders.[2]

Finance may be undermined by natural calamities such as drought, flood and famine, and man-made calamities such as the oppressions of the collector, allowance of remission of taxes in favour of leaders, false accounts of revenue, etc.[3] The army may be rendered weak by disloyal and treacherous elements, or neutralised either by those who are not paid or are guided by their wives.[4] Allies may be purchased by others or may be different to the fate of their friends.[5] The remedy for these ills is suggested by Kauṭilya in some cases. The general inference seems to be that the king should stand on guard against these weaknesses. He should try to understand the nature of calamities affecting a part of the elements or two elements. In the opinion of Kauṭilya even if two elements are affected by calamities, the project can be accomplished provided the other elements are in a serviceable condition. But if the calamity affecting even one element is such as may overwhelm the remaining elements, it should be considered a very serious affair,[6] and obviously the king should take note of it.

Kauṭilya's treatment of the calamities affecting the different elements of the state reminds us of Aristotle's exposition of the causes of instability in the state. Aristotle points out certain general causes affecting the state as a whole and also specific causes affecting particular types of government. The chief cause according to him is the struggle between the rich and poor, of which we hardly get any indication in Kauṭilya's discussion. As regards the remedy, Kauṭilya enjoins

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1. *karṣakaprāye tu durgavyasanam āyudhīyaprāye tu janapade janapadavyasanamiti*. *AŚ*, VIII. 1. The meaning of the first part of this passage is somewhat obscure.
2. *AŚ*, VIII. 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., VIII. 5.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., VIII. 1.

the king to be vigilant, a solution characteristic of the exalted position he assigns to the king in his system. But Aristotle recommends that a balance should be maintained between the forces of democracy and oligarchy.

The *Arthaśāstra* exposition of the calamities affecting the various elements of the state is to a large extent summarised in verse by the *Agni Purāṇa*, a work of the 9th century A.D.[1] Although the total space devoted to this topic in this text is much less[2] than that given in the *Arthaśāstra*, the Purāṇa refers to the weakness of the *sacivas* who, in its opinion, may suffer from sloth, indecision, arrogance, intoxication or insanity and double dealing.[3] We may note that the weakness of the *amātya* is not discussed by Kauṭilya, who also, does not mention in detail the weak points of the *durga*. The *Agni Purāṇa*, however, states that the fortified capital may be weakened by its ruined walls, ditches, and mechanical contrivances, lack of defence and deficiency in army.[4] In regard to the weakness of the army, this Purāṇa merely versifies the statement made by Kauṭilya, retaining the same words in most cases.[5] But in dealing with the infirmities of the different elements this text gives the largest space to weak points in the army, suggesting thereby that in the period and place represented by the *Agni Purāṇa* the greatest weight was attached to the apparatus of coercion.

Kauṭilya's exposition of the weaknesses of the elements of the state also throws light on the mutual relation of these organs,—a topic which has not been discussed in such detail by any other ancient thinker. Bhāradvāja argues that ministers are the mainstay of government; they initiate all important measures, and hence they should be considered as the most important.[6] But, in the opinion of Kauṭilya, of all the elements (*prakṛtis*) the king is the most important. If the king is endowed with sufficient qualities, he can equip the other elements with those qualities. But if he is wanting in the desirable qualifications the qualities of the other *prakṛtis* avail nothing;[7] on the

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1. R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, i, 209. Cf. B. B. Misra, *Polity in the Agni Purāṇa*, p. 24.
2. *Agni P.* (ASS), 241. 26-34.
3. Ibid., 241. 26-27.
4. Ibid., 241. 28.
5. Ibid., 241. 30-33.
6. *AŚ*, VIII. 1.
7. Ibid., VI. I.

contrary they are destroyed. The king appoints ministers, and superintendents, who take measures of relief against calamities befalling the other *prakṛtis*.[1] Even when he is powerless, he is the symbol of the state. He is the standard of sovereignty to rally loyalty and hold the realm together[2]. The whole position can be summed up in the epigrammatic sentence of Kauṭilya who states that the king is the state[3], which reminds us of the famous statement of Louis XIV "L etat, c'est moi." It is typical of the predominantly monarchical constitution in ancient India and especially of the completely monarchical attitude of Kauṭilya that the greatest importance is attached to kingship. In spite of weakening in royal power in later periods, the concept of the importance of the king repeatedly occurs in the Puraṇas of Gupta times. They assert that the king is the basis of the *saptāṅga* state, and hence of all the elements he should be preserved most, so that he might preserve the other six elements.[4]

As regards the other elements Kauṭilya argues that the preceding element is more important than the succeeding. For instance, the *amātya* is more important than the *janapada*[5], and the *janapada* more important than the *durga*, *kośa* and *daṇḍa*. But there is no doubt that in the opinion of Kauṭilya the king is the most vital of all elements, and even their basis.

In post-Maurya and Gupta times we notice a change in the attitude of political thinkers towards the relative value of the seven elements. Manu finds it impossible to state categorically that any one of the seven elements excels the others in merit, but that at different times a different element assumes importance over others, since that particular element is, in the particular circumstances, capable of accomplishing

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1. *AŚ*, VIII. 1.
2. Ibid., V. 6.
3. *rājā rajyamiti prakṛtisaṃkṣepaḥ*. *AŚ*. VIII. 2. In his comment to this passage Gaṇapati Śāstri holds that it refers to two elements, namely, *rājā* and *rājya* (*TGS*, iii), a view which has also been accepted by Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, p. 137. fn. 7. But this interpretation is hardly supported by the contents of the section in which the passage occurs.
4. *saptāṅgasyāpi rājyasya mūlaṃ svāmī prakīrtitaḥ. tanmūlatvāttathāṅgānāṃ sa tu rakṣyaḥ prayatnataḥ. Mārk P.* quoted on p. 23 and *Viṣṇudharmattara P.* on p. 153 of J. L. Shastri, op. cit.
5. *amātyamūlāḥ sarvārambhāḥ*. *AŚ*, VIII. 1.

the purpose in hand.[1] There is, however, some contradiction in Manu's statement, for earlier he states that the preceding element is more important than the succeeding element.[2] But this contradiction is not noticeable in the *Śānti Parva*[3], which confirms the statement of Manu. A similar position is taken up by Kāmandaka, who states that each of the seven elements is complementary to the others.[4] Such a view can be contrasted with that of Kauṭilya, who seems to underrate other elements and attaches the greatest weight to the *svāmī*. While Manu indicates a stage of transition when the king is considered both important and unimportant, the *Śānti Parva* and Kāmandaka clearly reflect a state of affairs when, in spite of the prevailing monarchical type, royal power receded into the background. This change in attitude towards the king can only be explained on the basis of post-Maurya and Gupta political and administrative developments, which show the rise of feudatories and the beginnings of the feudalisation of the state apparatus, ultimately leading to the decline of royal power.[5]

Probably because of the growing forces of disintegration in post-Maurya times Manu and the *Śānti Parva* emphasise the importance of coercive power or force. Manu looks upon *daṇḍa* as the real king, leader (*netā*) and administrator (*śāsitā*); it is the *daṇḍa* which governs the people, protects all and is the custodian of *dharma*[6]. If the king does not exercise coercive power, the strong devour the weak in the same manner as the fish are fried.[7] The *Śānti Parva* states that it does not behove a kṣatriya to remain without coercive power, for neither he nor his subjects can enjoy prosperity.[8] We learn how Jambudvīpa,

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1. *Manu*, IX. 297.
2. Ibid., IX. 295.
3. Extract quoted in Kane, *Hist. Dhs.*, iii, 18, fn. 21
4. *parasparopakārīdaṃ saptāṅgaṃ rājyamucyate*. IV. This passage is literally reproduced in *Agni P.*, Ch. 239; and also in *Matsya P.* quoted in Kane, *Hist. Dhs.*, ii, 18, fn. 21.
5. Infra, Ch. XVI.
6. *Manu*, VII. 17-18; the same in ms. D7S of *ŚP*. Fascicule 19, p. 620.
7. Ibid., VII. 20; the same in ms, D7S of *ŚP*, Fascicule 19. p. 620.
8. *nādaṇḍaḥ kṣatriyo bhāti nādaṇḍo bhūtimaśnute, nādaṇḍasya prajā rājñaḥ sukhamedhanti bhārata. ŚP*, 14. 14.

Krauñcadvīpa, Śakadvīpa, Bhadrāśva and other lands were subjugated by force (*daṇḍa*).[1] At least forty-eight verses in chapter 15 of the *Book of Peace* dilate on the importance of *daṇḍa*, some of these being the literal reproductions of the verses in Manu. Herein the functioning of *daṇḍa* is considered identical with the whole social order based on the varṇas, āśramas, marriage system, irrigation arrangements, workers, subjects, etc. The burden of several verses is that, if the *daṇḍa* abrogates its functions (*yadi daṇḍo na pālayet*), it will disturb all the aforesaid elements in society.[2] In chapter 121, where the problem is discussed again, it is stressed that the *daṇḍa* forms the organ and source of the state, which is represented as a body-politic consisting of seven elements and eight organs (*aṣṭāṅga*), but the meaning of the term *aṣṭāṅga* is not clear.[3] The importance of *daṇḍa* is further evident from the use of the term *daṇḍanīti* or the "mode of force or punishment", to the treatment of which this text devotes the whole of chapter 70[4]. Both Manu and the *Śānti Parva*, however, enjoin that force should be exercised according to law. In enforcing his authority the king should take into account the precepts of the *śāstras* and the advice of the ministers according to Manu, and the *vyavahāra* based on the Veda and *dharma* according to the *Śānti Parva*.[5] Although the importance of *daṇḍa* in the two texts is not discussed in the context where the seven elements are mentioned, there is no doubt that they attach great weight to this element. In the case of Yājñavalkya, whose law-book seems to have been compiled towards the beginning of the Gupta period, the value of *daṇḍa* is stressed immediately after the enumeration of seven elements. It is stated that having obtained the seven-element state the king should use his authority (*daṇḍa*) in punishing the wicked, for *dharma* was created in the form

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1. *ŚP*, 14. 21-25.
2. Ibid., 15. 37-45.
3. *saptaprakṛti cāṣṭāṅgaṃ śarīramiha yadviduḥ, rājyasya daṇḍa evāṅgaṃ daṇḍaḥ prabhava eva ca. ŚP*, 121. 46.
4. In ms. D7S the importance of *daṇḍa* is further emphasised in about 40 verses inserted after *ŚP*. 14. 14 (Fascicule 19. pp. 619-20) and in 24 verses inserted after *ŚP*, 95. 4 (Fascicule 19, pp. 629-30).
5. *Manu*, VII. 31 ; *ŚP*, 121. 50-54.

of *daṇḍa* by Brahmā in ancient times.[1] The following five verses deal with the usefulness of coercive power.[2] Thus the element of *daṇḍa* seems to have assumed considerable significance in post-Maurya times, when centrifugal forces had been set in motion on account of foreign invasions and internal uprisings.[3]

Perhaps the same factor also explains the "organic" theory of the state, which is not much in evidence in Kauṭilya. The only indication of the integration of the various elements in Kauṭilya is the view that a serious distress affecting one element might overtake the remainder. In ordinary course even two organs of the state may get into trouble, and still the state can function presumably because of the efficiency of the *svāmī*. But Manu expresses the close inter-relation of the organs in clear terms. First, for the first time he and the *Śānti Parva* use the term *aṅga*, which implies that the organs are comparable to the limbs of the body.[4] Secondly, he compares the organs to the three staves of a *sannyāsin*, well-knit together so as to form a single staff.[5] More emphatic on this question is the view of Kāmandaka, according to whom even if one organ is defective it will endanger the normal functioning of the whole state, and so the impaired organ should be repaired.[6] The most clear enunciation of the organic theory of the state is found in Śukra, who compares the different parts of the state with those of the human body[7], but this very late work cannot be used for the ancient period.

There seems to be one basic difference between the ancient Indian concept and the modern organic view of the state which was expounded in the nineteenth century by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). His object seems to have been to underline the

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1. *tadavāpya nṛpo daṇḍaṃ durvṛtteṣu nipātayet, dharmo hi daṇḍarūpeṇa brahmaṇā nirmitaḥ purā.* 1. 353-54.

2. I. 355-59.

3. *caṇḍālamlecchajātīnāṃ daṇḍena ca nivāraṇam.* Ms D7S of *ŚP*, Fascicule 19, p. 630.

4. Manu IX. 294; *ŚP*, 69. 63 in ms. Ds.

5. IX. 296.

6. IV. 2.

7. *dṛgamātyaḥ suhṛcchrotraṃ mukhaṃ keśo balaṃ manaḥ hastau pādau durgarāṣṭrau rājyāṅgāni smṛtāni hi. Śukra*, 1. 62.

unity of the industrial state, for he compares the industrial organisation to the elementary organ, commercial (distributive) organisation to the circulatory organ, political organisation to the nervo-motor organs, and the legislature to the cerebrum in man. On the other hand the organic conception of the state in ancient India was intended to stress the importance of the different elements in relation to the head of the state. It seems that the emphasis on the importance of the other elements was due to the growing independence of the hereditary *amātyas* and *daṇḍanāyakas*. Since this tendency is not strong in the Maurya period, Kauṭilya does not clearly advocate the organic view of the state. But this view is more clearly expounded by the Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle, who were the near contemporaries of Kauṭilya. Plato compares the state to the natural body of a man. He points out that when a finger is hurt the whole body feels the pain, so also when a member of the state is hurt all suffer likewise. In his opinion that state is the best in which the unity is that of the natural man. Aristotle cannot conceive of the part of the state unles she has conceived of the whole to which the part belongs. As a hand is not a hand unless it is attached to the body, so man is not man unless he is the member of a state. Comparing the state with the body, he further points out that the exaggeration of any part of the state is like the exaggeration of a part of the body. Thus the Greek theory implies that no organ of the state should be allowed to assume undue proportions and to function as a state within the state. The idea is, therefore, to emphasise the unity of the state, which was jeopardised by the perpetual struggle between the democratic and oligarchical elements in the Greek cities. But in spite of the fact that the practical scheme of Kauṭilya provides for a very much centralised and well-knit state apparatus, this is not so much reflected in his theoretical discussions.

The review of the *saptāṅga* theory of the state shows that it not only bears some resemblance to the modern definition of the state, but also possesses certain basic elements typical of the theory of the state expounded by Engels. Perhaps its resemblance to the modern organic view of the state can be explained on the basis that in the interests of the ruling class in all ages attempts have been made to

emphasise the unity of the state. But, if we apply the term modern to the concept of the state in Western democracies, we notice that the modern definition is characterised by that abstraction and abstruseness which are wanting in its ancient counterpart. Hence it would be too much to say that the ancient Indian conception of the state is "surprisingly modern"[1] in character.

1. *HCIP*, ii, 307.

Chapter IV

THEORIES OF PROPERTY, FAMILY AND VARṆA REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE

In the study of the origin of the state reference has been made to the state of nature depicted in the Buddhist sources[1], but no attempt has been made to present its complete picture on the basis of all the sources including the Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata*, and Jain traditions.[2] A comparative examination of these sources not only furnishes an idea of the early state of nature but also sheds new light on the circumstances which led to the origin of the state.

Although the pictures differ in detail from one another, four essential characteristics of the early state of nature stand out clearly. First, the earliest means of subsistence was the fruits and roots of trees. The description of a *kalpavṛkṣa* as the main source of the livelihood of the people is a very common affair in brāhmaṇical and Jain traditions[3]. The Buddhist traditions refer to wild creepers (*vanalatā*) and some sort of roots (*bhūmiparpaṭaka*) as the earliest means of subsistence.[4] It is natural that in the earliest state of his life, which generally corresponds to the Kṛta age of the Purāṇas and epics, man should have lived as a food-gatherer and not as a food-producer. This is supported by anthropology and is true of the people of the palaeolithic age.[5] As Morgan points out, the first livelihood was "natural subsistence upon fruits and roots on a restricted habitat."[6] Nobody could then conceive that the fruits and trees belonged exclu-

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1. Ghoshal, *HPT*, pp. 118-20; Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures*, 1918, pp. 115-22; Bandyopadhaya; *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*; pp. 275-77; Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, pp. 34 ff.; Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, pp. 235-36; Dikshitar *Hindu Administrative Institutions*, pp. 17-18; Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, pp. 12-14.

2. *Mārk. P.* Ch. 49; *Vāyu P.*, i, Ch. 8; *Kūrma P.*, Ch. 29; *Brahma. P.*, Ch. 5 ; *Viṣṇu P.*, Bk.I. Ch. 6; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, Chs. 29-31; *Padma Carita*, Ch. 3 ; *Tibetan Dulva* quoted in Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 2-9; *Mahāvastu*, i, 340-48; *Dīgha Nikāya*, Aggañn Sutta; *ŚP*, Chs. 59, 67, 69 and 206.

3. *Vāyu P.*, i. VIII. 84; *Padma Carita*, III. 55.

4. *Mahāvastu*, i, 340-41.

5. Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, Ch. IV.

6. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 20.

sively to him. It was a period of savagery, when "a passion for its (property's) possession had scarcely been formed in their (men's) minds, because the thing itself scarcely existed. It was left to the then distant period of civilization to develop into full vitality that greed of gain (*studium lucri*), which is now such a commanding force in the human mind."[1]

Second, probably there was nothing like the institution of family based on the supremacy of man over woman. Except in the *Mahābhārata*, the traditions about the state of nature give no clear indication of the origin of the monogamous family, in which the father becomes supreme and all the domestic activities centre round the wife. As the *Śānti Parva* states: "A householder's home, even if filled with sons, grandsons, daughters-in-law and servants, is regarded empty if destitute of the housewife. One's house is not one's home; only one's wife is one's home."[2] But how did this home originate ? The epic and Purāṇic traditions state that formerly there existed a state of promiscuity when children could be produced merely by *saṃkalpa*, the desire to cohabit. In the Kṛta age there was neither mating (*maithuna*) nor recognised monogamous marriage system (*dvandva*).[3] The *Śānti Parva* informs us that in the land of the Uttarakurus the institution of marriage did not exist. This is also supported by the *Aṭānaṭiya-sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, which refers to the land of Kuru in these words: "There do men live calling no goods their own. Nor as their chattels any womenkind."[4]

Third, it is clearly stated in the Purāṇas that there were no varṇas in the Kṛta age. In their account of the earliest life of mankind[5] the Buddhist sources also do not mention the division of the people into social classes.

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1. Ibid. p. 27.

2. *ŚP*, 144. 5-6; *Mbh.*, 1.4.9, 12.

3, *na caiṣāṃ maithuno dharmo babhūva bharatarṣabha, saṃkalpādeva caiteṣām apatyam upapadyate. dvāpare maithuno dharmasteṣāmapi janādhipa, tathā kaliyuge rājan dvandvamābedire janāḥ. ŚP*, 207, 38-41 ; *tāsāṃ viśuddhāt saṃkalpājjāyante mithunāḥ prajāḥ. Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 57. The interpretation of the crucial passage of the *ŚP* follows that of Dange, *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, p. 67. Bachofen was the first modern scholar to bring to light traces of promiscuous intercourse in historical and religious traditions.

4. *ŚP* (Bombay edn.), 102. 26 ; *SBB*, iv, 192.

5. *Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 60; *Mahāvastu*, i, 340-46; *SBB*, iv, 62-67; Rockhill *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 2-6.

Fourth, the statements of the *Śānti Parva* make it clear that in the early stage of the state of nature the institution of the state did not exist.[1] According to Kauṭilya in certain lands called *vairājya* there was no kingly office, and the people thereof had no sense of thine and mine.[2] This implies that the absence of the ruler coincided with the lack of private property.

Primitive societies existing in recent times show that the institutions of property, family and class (or caste) are hardly to be found in the earliest stage of the man's life. It is not just a mere coincidence that according to ancient texts, in the absence of these institutions, the state also did not exist. As will be shown later, there was a vital connection between the existence of these institutions and the rise of the state. Although people living without these institutions cannot be called civilised, they enjoyed a kind of harmonious life free from cares, anxieties and greed.[3] The main characteristics of this state of nature, which find place in almost all the classical sources and are supported by anthropological evidence,[4] must have some basis in the existing facts. Hence it would not be correct to dismiss the state of nature—describing a happy life—as fanciful.[5]

But this harmonious tenor of life was destroyed by the discovery of the art of cultivation,[6] which enabled people to produce more than they could consume. There began the tendency to store rice.[7] and people "appropriated to themselves by force and violence rivers, fields, hills, trees, shrubs and plants.[8]" For the first time they established their separate

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1. *na vai rājyaṃ na rājāsīnna daṇḍo na ca dāṇḍikaḥ. ŚP*, 59. 14.

2. *vairājyaṃ tu jīvataḥ parasyācchidya "naitanmama" iti manyamānaḥ. AŚ*, VII I. 2. The sense of this passage has been given above on the basis of Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 83.

3. *Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 48-49, 52, 62, 65 ; *viśakāssattvabahulā ekāntabahulāstathā...tā vai niṣkāmacariṇyo nityaṃ muditamānasāḥ. Kūrma P.*, Ch. 29.

4. Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, Ch. VI.

5. Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, pp. 33-4.

6. *Vāyu, P.*, i, VIII. 128. 142-45, 154; *Mārk P.*, Ch. 49 51; 60 & 74; *tasmin vanalate antarhite taṃ śālim akaṇaṃ atuṣaṃ surabhitaṇḍulaphalam āharamāharantā ciraṃ dīrghamadhvānaṃ tiṣṭhensu. Mahāvastu*, i, 342.

7. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, p. 5; *SBB*, iv, 86; *Mahāvastu*, i. 343.

8. *tatstāḥ paryyagṛhṇanta nadīkṣetrāṇi parvatān. Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 31, *Mārk, P.*, 49. 62; *Kūrma P.*, Ch. 29.

houses, which required the sanction of law. Rice fields were divided, and boundaries were set up round them saying : "This is thine, this is mine.[1]" But when people began to snatch away the rice of others without their consent, there arose the necessity of some authority which would protect their respective fields. And that led to the creation of the office of the *mahā-khattiya* or protector of the fields.[2]

The Buddhist sources not only emphasise the importance of the rise of private property in the origin of the state but also vaguely refer to the role of the family in this connection. They inform us that when sexual congress began between man and woman, in order to conceal their sin they built houses (or huts).[3] Probably one house was meant for one pair. According to the *Tibetan Dulva* this was the first appearance of division by houses (or families ?) in the world, and this division was made lawful or not lawful according to the king's decision.[4] At one place the *Śānti Parva* refers to the rise of *dvandva* or monogamous family in the Kali age but does not connect it with the rise of the state.[5]

The importance of varṇas (social classes) in the rise of the state is chiefly dealt with in the Purāṇas. According to them when the means of subsistence had been provided, people were divided into four varṇas. Brāhmaṇas were meant for praying, kṣatriyas for fighting, vaiśyas for producing and śūdras for manual tasks. Apparently this division worked in favour of those who fought and prayed, and was probably resented by the conscious producers. Therefore at one place the *Vāyu Purāṇa* states that the duties of the castes were settled but they did not fulfil their respective duties and came into mutual conflict.[6] "Having become aware of this fact the Lord Brahmā prescribed criminal justice (*daṇḍa*) and war as the profession

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1. *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 5-6 ; *SBB*, iv, 87.
2. *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 6-7; *SBB*, iv, 88; *Mahāvastu*, i, 347-48.
3. *Mahāvastu*, i, 343 ; *SBB*, iv, 85; *The Life of the Buddha*, p 4.
4. *The Life of the Buddha*, p. 5
5. 207. 40.
6. *varṇadharmairjīvantyo vyarudhyanta parasparam...Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 155-60; cf. *Padma Carita*, III. 240.

of the kṣatriya"[1]. An analogous account of the origin of the state is given at another place in the same text. It states that Brahmā established the *varṇāśrama* institution, but the people did not observe their respective duties and came into clash with one another. Therefore they approached Manu, who produced the first two kings namely Priyavrata and Uttānapāda. Henceforth the kings came to be vested with *daṇḍa*, the rod of authority.[2] Therefore in the Purāṇic view the state arose to check the mutual struggle between the different varṇas. Obviously this anticipates the theory of a modern school that "the stage came into existence owing to the necessity of curbing class-antagonisms.[3]"

In the *Śānti Parva*, which seems to present a synthesis of the speculations, the part played by all the three institutions, property, family and caste, in the origin of the state can be seen at one place. The circumstances that led to the creation of the state are set forth clearly: "The wealth of one is snatched away by two, that of those two is snatched away by many acting together. He who is not a slave is made slave. Women, again, are forcibly abducted. For these reasons the gods created kings for protecting the people.[4]" And when the people made a compact to put an end to such a state of affairs, its two main conditions were that they should throw out those who abducted other people's wives or robbed other's wealth.[5] Besides, the compact was made to "inspire confidence amongst all varṇas.[6]" In order to place the agreement on a permanent footing they went out in search of a king. They were prepared to give him a certain share of their own property and beautiful maidens in marriage.[7] The result would be that the king would have a vital and permanent interest not only in the preservation of his property and family but also of those of his subjects. It

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1. *brahmā tamartham buddhvā yāthātathyena vai prabhuḥ, kṣatriyāṇāṃbalaṃ daṇḍaṃ yuddhamājivamādiśat. Vāyu P.*, i, VIII. 161.

2. *varṇāśramavyavasthānaṃ teṣāṃ brahmā tathākarot. punaḥ prajāstu tö mohāttān dharmānna hyapālayan, parasparavirodhena manuntāḥ punaranvayuḥ... priyavratottānapadau prathamantau mahīpatī, tataḥ prabhṛti rājānna utpannā daṇḍadhāriṇaḥ...Vāyu P.*, i, 57. 55-58.

3. F. Engels, *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 244.

4. *ŚP*, 67 14-15

5. Ibid., 67. 17-18.

6. Ibid., 67. 19.

7. Ibid., 67. 23-24.

was on such conditions that Manu finally accepted the kingship. The Purāṇic tradition also credits the first traditional king Manu Svāyambhuva with the establishment of the varṇas and the moral rules.[1]

Besides Manu, Pṛthu is represented as the first traditional king by the epic and Purāṇic traditions.[2] They inform us that one of the main complaints of the people was that dishonest men seized the property of their neighbours. When Pṛthu was consecrated, he removed the grievances of the people.[3] At the time of his coronation, the first king Pṛthu assured the people in these words: "I shall establish the *svadharma*, *varṇadharma* and *āśramadharma*, and enforce them with the rod of punishment.[4]" It is further said that the first king was equally honoured by all the four varṇas.[5]

In this connection the Dharmaśāstras contain two stray references, which may be relevant to the study of our problem. Nārada and Bṛhaspati, although the lawgivers of Gupta times, seem to have retained the memories of the old golden age, its destruction and the consequent rise of *vyavahāra* (justice or *daṇḍa*),—the chief instrument of the state authority. For example, Nārada speculates upon the origin of *vyavahāra* in these words: "When mortals were being bent on doing their duty alone and habitually veracious, there existed neither *vyavahāra* nor hatred, nor selfishness. The practice of duty having died out, *vyavahāra* has been introduced; and the king has been appointed to decide lawsuits because he has authority to punish." Bṛhaspati also expresses identical views. According to him in former ages men were strictly virtuous and devoid of mischievous propensities. Only when avarice and malice had taken possession of them, *vyavahāra* was established.[6] It is

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1. *paramparāgataṃ dharmaṃ smārtañcācāralakṣanam, varṇāśramācārayntaṃ manuḥ svāyambhuvo' bravīta. Vāyu P.*, i. 4 57. 41.
2. *ŚP*, 59. 125.
3. *Viṣṇu P.*, Bk. I. Ch. XIII.
4. *Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra*, VIII.
5. *Brahma P.*, V. 116-21.
6. *dharmaikatānāḥ puruṣāstadāsan satyavādinaḥ tadā na vyavahāro'bhunna, dveṣo nāpimatsaraḥ naṣṭe dharme manuṣyeṣu vyavahārah pravarttate.* Nārada. *dharmapradhānāḥ puruṣāḥ purvamāsanna himṣakāḥ, lobhadveṣābhibhutānāṃ vyavahāraḥ pravarttate.* Bṛhaspati. Quoted in *Vīramitrodaya*, p. 4.

tempting to suggest that the good old days of Nārada and Bṛhaspati, when everything was all right, correspond to the Kṛta age or the period of the state of nature described in Buddhist and Jain sources. The fact that the golden age disappeared due to the advent of "selfishness", "avarice", "hatred", and "malice" probably refers to the rise of private property, family and caste, which naturally give rise to feelings of greed and mutual hatred. If that be the interpretation of the references in question, it is possible to theorise that *vyavahāra*, the principal apparatus of the state power, arose to protect the institutions of property and to keep the feelings of mutual hatred and selfishness under check.

Direct references to the origin of the state cited above throw sufficient light on the importance of property, family and caste in this respect, but certain indirect evidence may also be examined. One line of approach may be: what would happen if the state did not exist ? The one recurrent theme in the *Śānti Parva*, the *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, which contain long descriptions of *arājaka* (kingless) states, is that family and property would not be safe in such a state.[1] It is stated that if the king did not exercise the duty of protection: "Nobody, then, with reference to any article in his possession would be able to say—this is mine. Wives, sons, food and other kinds of property would not then exist."[2] Once the state was established on a firm basis, it came to be regarded as the greatest safeguard of one's wife and property. Therefore it was wisely laid down that one should first select a king in whose dominion to live; then should he select a wife, and then earn wealth. If there be no king, what would become of his wife and wealth[3] ? Naturally in such a case the strong would forcibly appropriate the possession of the weak.[4] Bhandarkar has quoted five passages, which suggest that the kingly office arose to protect the weak against the strong.[5] Possibly it may

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1. *ŚP*,Ch. 68 ; *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*, Ch. 67 ; *Viṣṇudharmottara P.*, Bk. II. Ch. 11 quoted in Jagdish Lal Shastri, *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*, pp. 120-21.
2. *ŚP*, 68. 15, 33 ; cf. *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*, 67. 10-11, 31; *Viṣṇudharmottara P.*, Bk. II. Ch. 11. 14 quoted in *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*, p. 121.
3. *rājānaṃ prathamaṃ vindet tato bhāryāṃ tato dhanam, rājanyasati lokasya kuto bhāryā kuto dhanam. ŚP*, 57. 46.
4. *ŚP*, 68. 14.
5. Bhandarkar, op. cit., pp. 115-18.

not be correct to interpret the "weak" as poor and "strong" as rich. But there are certain references which give the impression that the kingly office was meant to support the haves against the combined attacks of have-nots. It is apprehended that in the absence of the royal protection the wicked men would forcibly siege the vehicles, robes, ornaments and precious stones, and other kinds of property belonging to others.[1] Obviously only the wealthy could own such items of property. It is also said that, if the king does not protect, the wealthy would have to encounter death, confinement and persecution.[2] In such a situation two persons combining together snatch the wealth of one, and many acting in concert rob the two.[3] The *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* informs us that in a kingless state the wealthy feel insecure, and they cannot sleep keeping their door open.[4] In this connection it would be of interest to quote from the story of Vena and Pṛthu from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. When the enraged sages extinguished the life of Vena, the whole atmosphere was surcharged with dust on all sides. As the sages wanted to know the reason of such a change, the people said: "Due to the kingdom being kingless the poor have turned thieves and have begun looting the property of others. O sages, it is on account of the depredations of these thieves, who swiftly usurp the wealth of others, that this great storm of dust is being raised."[5]

Furthermore, it is stated that under anarchical conditions all restrictions about marriage and intercourse come to an end, and the institution of marriage ceases to exist[6]; it is not possible to give away daughter in marriage in the normal way in a kingless state.[7] Besides, in the absence of the king the *varṇavyavasthā* (the system of social divisions) is destroyed and an intermixture of castes take place.[8] Exactly the same

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1. *ŚP*, 68. 16.
2. *ŚP*, 68. 19.
3. *ŚP*, 90. 39-40.
4. 67. 18
5. *tataśca munayo reṇuṃ dadṛśuḥ sarvato dvija, kimetaditi cāsannānpāpracchuste janāṃstadā. ākhyātaṃ ca janaisteṣāṃ corabhūtairarājake, rāṣṭre tu lokairārabdhoṃ parasvādānāmāturaiḥ. teṣāmudīrṇavegānāṃ corāṇāṃ munisattamāḥ, sumahān dṛśyate reṇuḥ paravittāpahāriṇām. Viṣṇu P.*, Bk. I. Ch. 13. 30-32.
6. *ŚP*, 68. 21-22).
7. *arājakeṣu rāṣṭreṣu naioa kanyā pradīyate Viṣṇudharmottara P.* quoted in *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*, p. 120.
8. *ŚP*, 68.29.

consequences follow if *daṇḍa*, the coercive power of the state, disappears. It is pointed out that it was by means of *daṇḍa* that the misappropriation of other people's possessions was stopped and that is why it was called *vyavahāra*. But once when it disappeared, the results were disastrous. "There were no restraints in the matter of the union of the sexes. All idea of property ceased. All creatures began to rob..."[1] Thus it can be argued that, since the absence of the ruler or *daṇḍa* is regarded in the classical traditions as a great menace to the institutions of property, family and caste, the state arose out of the necessity to protect them.

The chief duties of the king also can throw light on the purpose for which his office was created. One of the main duties of the king was the protection of private property by punishing the thief, and that of family by punishing the adulterers. So great was the responsibility for protecting property that it was incumbent on the king to restore to a subject the stolen wealth at any cost.[2] That the king was intimately connected with the protection and probably even the distribution of wealth was the popular notion, which can be inferred from a passage of the *Pañcatantra*. It states that the person who desires wealth should approach the king.[3] The Tamil classic *Tirukkuṛaḷ* also defines the king as one who is capable of acquiring, preserving and distributing wealth.[4] The old law-books suggest that only the authority of the state could assure "seven modes" of acquiring and "three titles" to property.[5] A king of strict rule is described as one who cherishes the poor.[6] But there is also some evidence to the contrary. It is ordained that the king should always honour those of his subjects that are rich because in every kingdom the wealthy constitute an estate. Further, there is no doubt that a wealthy person is the foremost of men.[7]

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1. *ŚP*, 121..13; cf *Manu*, VII. 20-34.
2. *ŚP*, 75. 10; *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*, II. 10, 27. 4; *Agni P.* quoted on pp. 43 and 67, and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* quoted on pp. 147-48 of *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*.
3. *Pañcatantra*, p. 104.
4. Dikshitar's Translation, p. 81.
5. *Vasiṣṭha*, XVI. 10; *Manu*, X. 115.
6. *ŚP*, 139. 97
7. *dhaninaḥ pujayennityaṃ yānācchādanabhojanaiḥ... aṅgametanmahadrājñāṃ dhanino nāma bhārata, kakudaṃ sarvabhūtānāṃ dhanastho nātra saṃśayaḥ. ŚP*, 88.26-30. Cf. Critical edn. 89. 25-26 which has been preferred here.

The preservation of family and the prevention of adultery was another great responsibility of the king. Manu enumerates eighteen offences into which the king should look. Out of them ten offences are connected with property and two with family.[1] Similarly Kātyāyana lists ten wrongs deserving attention by the king. Out of them five are connected with property and one with family.[2] It is only natural that most of the offences against the state should be linked with questions of property because it was thought that poverty lies at the root of all evils and the poor are always full of vices.[3] It was recognised that the poor people can resort to all sorts of crimes.[4] Kātyāyana feels especially concerned that there should be sudden accession of riches to indigent men.[5] Out of seven conditions, which the Buddha laid down for the success of the Vajji state, two can be said to be related to property and family. One condition was that the Vajjis should act in accordance with the *vajjidharma* as established in the old days. If the term *vajjidharma* is explained in the light of the extract from the *Aṭṭakathā* quoted in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, it means that the thief should be punished according to law.[6] A second condition clearly enjoins that they should not detain among them by force or abduction women or girls belonging to them.[7] Especially according to the Buddhist sources the punishment of thieves was one of the primary charges of the king, and the thief could be summarily killed at the order of the king either by hanging or by the removal of his skin, flesh, bones, etc.[8]

The Buddhist sources, however, do not refer to the maintenance of the castes, which according to the brāhmaṇical

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1. *Manu*, VIII. 4-7.
2. Verses 947-48.
3. *Mṛcchakaṭika*, I. 8-15, 36, 53; III. 24, 27; V. 8-9; IV. 5; X. 16, etc.
4. *kiṃ citraṃ yadi nirdhano'pi puruṣaḥ pāpaṃ na kuryāt kvacit. Garuḍa P.* cited in *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*, p. 101.
5. Verses 849-50.
6. *Dīgha Nikāya* (Hindi), pp. 118-19.
7. Ibid., p. 118.
8. Ibid. pp. 201, 204, cf. p. 236.

sources was one of the most notable functions of the king. Practically all important sources state that the duty of the king was to uphold the observance of the respective duties of the four castes.[1] According to the *Rāmāyaṇa* under the ideal rule of Daśaratha members of the different castes pursued their respective avocations.[2] As will be shown later,[3] inscriptions provide solid evidence about the obligation of the king to preserve the varṇa system.

Of the ancient Indian lawgivers, Manu laid special emphasis on the preservation of the caste system by the king. In his view the kingdom prospers only so long as the purity of castes is maintained otherwise it perishes together with its inhabitants.[4] Almost the same idea is expressed by Plato in his *Republic*. To quote him : "Any meddlesome interchange between the three classes would be most mischievous to the state and would properly be described as the height of villainy.[5]" At one place Manu declares that only those who live like Āryans deserve the protection of the king.[6] This is also corroborated by the *Bṛhannāradīya Purāṇa*, a work of about the 9th century A.D.,[7] which lays special emphasis on the protection of the first three varṇas.[8] Generally the maintenance of the caste system was considered as an indispensable element of *dharma*, for according to Kāmandaka if *dharma* is violated by the members of the state, there is bound to be a *pralaya* or dissolution of the whole social order.[9]

It appears that the existence of the state or the ruler was so completely identified with the maintenance of the institutions of property, family and the varṇa system that the *Śānti Parva* provides the same punishment for a person guilty of arson,

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1. *AŚ*, III. 1; *Kāmandaka Nītisāra*, XIII. 41, 58; *Bṛhaspati AŚ*, III. 18; *Manu*, VII. 17, 35; *Kātyāyana*, Verses 949-50; *ŚP*, 57.15, 53.27, 56. 12, 77. 11-17; *Brahma P.*, 222. 103; *Viṣṇu P.*, Bk., III. Ch. 8; *Matsya P.* quoted on p. 5, *Agni P.* quoted on p. 49, *Mārkaṇḍeya P.* quoted on p. 81 and *Vāyu P.* quoted on p. 153 of *Political Thought in the Purāṇas*.
2. *Bāla Kāṇḍa*, VI. 17, 19.
3. Infra, Ch. XII.
4. *Manu*, X. 61; cf. *Śakranītisära*, IV. 1.215-16.
5. *The Republic*, iii, 434.
6. IX. 253.
7. R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, i, 344.
8. *Bṛhannāradiya P.*, 104. 62.
9. 11. 34.

theft, or the cohabitation of women which may lead to intermixture of castes, as is prescribed for the person guilty of compassing the death of the king.[1] Such a conception of the king's duties continued to persist till mediaeval times. For instance, the *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi* of Someśvaradeva (beginning of the 12th century A.D.) also lays emphasis on the similar duties of the king as the preventer of thefts and immoral activities,[2] and the defender of the *varṇāsrama* system.[3]

Consistent with the view of the basic function of the state expressed above it is natural that the Hindu political thinkers should make sins of violating the laws of property and family inherent in the very nature of man. According to Kāmandaka men are by nature subject to passions and are covetors of one another's wealth and wives.[4] Manu holds that rare is the man pure or sinless. In his opinion people are prone to interfering with the rights of others and violating morals and manners.[5] Thus if the violation of the laws of the property and family are considered as the innate natural weaknesses of man, it follows that the state should be created as a natural necessity to restrain these evils.

The king in ancient India is commonly described as the upholder of *dharma*. The Buddhist sources also hold before him the ideal of *dharmadhvaja*, *dharmaketu* and *dharmādhipati*.[6] What the *dharma* meant in the case of the Vajjis has been explained above.[7] But what were the concrete contents of the brāhmaṇical *dharma* which the king was asked to uphold ? This may be known from the Dharmaśāstras—the law-books to be followed by the kings. They contain elaborate chapters on property laws, marriage relations and caste system. The *Śānti Parva* , which describes *dharma* as resting upon the king,[8] refers to the con-

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1. 85.22.
2. *corebhyo mānyakebhyaśca tathaivārthādhikāritaḥ coraissāhasikaiscāḍhyaiḥ durācāraistathā paraiḥ.* Verse 157.
3. *pūjanaṃ suraviprāṇāṃ varṇāśramanirīkṣaṇam māraṇaṃ taskarādīnāmātmarakṣāvidhikramam* Verses 710-11
4. II. 42.
5. VII. 21-22, 24.
6. *Dīgha Nikāya* (Hindi), p. 234.
7. Supra, p. 59.
8. 90.5.

sequences of its disappearance in these words : "When sinfulness is not restrained no one can, according to the rights of property as laid down in the scripture, say—this thing is mine and this is not mine. When sinfulness prevails in the world, men cannot own and enjoy their own wives, animals, fields and houses."[1] It is also stated that *dharma* is meant to aid the acquisition and preservation of wealth ; if *adharma* increases it causes a confusion of castes.[2] In the address of the sages to the tyrannical king Vena, *dharma* is explained in similar terms. They warn him that *dharma* is the greatest friend of men of all castes. If the king renounces *dharma*, nobody's wife, wealth or house would be his own. According to Kauṭilya when all *dharmas* perish, the king becomes the promulgator of the *dharma* for the establishment of the fourfold varṇa system and the protection of morality.[3] Therefore in concrete terms the king's maintenance of *dharma* signified nothing but the defence of the social order based on family, property and caste. The ideal set forth for the realisation of the king also reflects the purpose of the kingly office. The dominant ideal that moved the kings in ancient India was the attainment of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. If the term *artha* is taken in the sense of enjoyment of property, the term *kāma* in the sense of the enjoyment of family life and the term *dharma* in the sense of the maintenance of the legal system, it would be clear that in the *trivarga* ideal also the conceptions of property, family and caste dominated. It may, however, be noted that according to some ancient Indian traditions *artha* (property) lay at the basis of the *trivarga* ideal, and without this it was not possible to achieve the other two objectives.[4]

From whatever point of view we study the problem of the origin of the state—the circumstances in the state of nature leading to the rise of the state, the conditions obtaining in kingless community, the chief duties of the king, the impli-

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1. *ŚP*, 90. 9-10.
2. Ibid., 90. 17, 35.
3. *AŚ*, III. 1.
4. *dhanavān dharmamāpnoti dhanavān kāmamaśnute. Agni P.* quoted on p. 42 and *Viṣṇudharmottara P.* quoted on p. 145 of *Political Thought in the Purāṇas. tyajanti mitrāṇi dhanairvihīnaṃ putrāśa dārāśca suhṛjjanāśca. Garuḍa P.* quoted on p. 92 of *Political Thought in the Purāṇas.*

cation of the upholding of *dharma* by the king, the ideal to be followed by him—it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the opinion of early thinkers and law-givers property, family and caste played the primary and vital role in the rise of the state in ancient India.

Chapter V

THE CONTRACT THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE :

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

Attempts have been made to find out the counterparts of the Western theories of the origin of the state in ancient Indian texts, but this has been done without much care for the age and the historical background of their sources. The task is rendered difficult because of the uncertainties which hang over many texts, not only in regard to their dates but also in regard to their contents. Any attempt at the reconstruction of the history of a political theory, such as the contract theory of the origin of the state, will be provisional in nature. In doing so we have to fall back upon the generally accepted chronology of the texts, which include the Brāhmaṇas, the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, the *Mahāvastu* and the *rājadharma* section of the *Śānti Parva*. This chronological order is, however, not followed by some scholars, who take up the *Śānti Parva* evidence first and follow it up with the data from the *Dīgha Nikāya* and Kauṭilya.[1] But the *rājadharma* section of the *Śānti Parva* cannot be placed earlier than the first century A.D. It is significant that Chapter 67 deals with the contract theory of the origin of the state and Chapter 65 (verse 13) refers to the Pahlavas (Parthians).

The first faint traces of the contract theory of the origin of the state are to be found in two Brāhmaṇas, which refer to the origin of kingship through election among the gods on account of the compelling necessity of carrying on successful war against the Asuras.[2] In one Brāhmaṇa this idea is further developed in connection with the great coronation ceremony of Indra. It is stated that headed by Prajāpati the gods said to one another

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1. Altekar, *State & Government in Ancient India*, p. 27 ff. Beni Prasad's *The Theory of Government in Ancient India* suffers from complete lack of historical perspective inasmuch as it treats the didactic material in the epic first and follows it up with Manu, Arthaśāstras, Dharmaśāstras, Buddhist and Jain sources, etc.

2. *AB*, I. 14, 23; *TB*, I. 5. 9.

that amongst them Indra was "the most vigorous, the most strong, the most perfect, the best in carrying out any work." So they decided to install him in kingship and accordingly to perform his *mahābhiṣeka*, in which he was consecrated for different forms of royalty.[1] Obviously election implies some sort of consent on the part of the electors as well as the elect, but their mutual obligations are not specified in the text. Nevertheless, since necessities of war form the background of election in which stress is laid on the physical qualities of the king,[2] the obligations of obedience on the part of the subjects and that of command and protection on the part of the king are implicit in the transaction. How far this speculation represents the real nature of kingship in the later Vedic period is difficult to say. The election in divine society may be regarded as a reflection of the practice in early Vedic tribal society, for the coronation ceremonies suggest that by the end of the Vedic period kingship had been firmly established on hereditary basis. It is said that the Brāhmaṇas anticipate in some measure the celebrated theory of Social Contract of later times.[3] But if we take a narrow view of social contract, it means that people agree amongst themselves to respect the family and property of one another and thus lay the foundations of society. This idea is not advanced in the Brāhmaṇas, which seem to visualise some kind of political contract.

Although the contract theory of the origin of the state is anticipated by early brāhmaṇical literature, the first clear and developed exposition of this theory is found in the Buddhist canonical text *Dīgha Nikāya*, where the story of creation reminds us of the ideal state of Rousseau followed by the state of nature as depicted by Hobbes. We may summarise the main stages in this story, which is related by the Buddha to refute the brāhmaṇa's claim for precedence over members of all the other social classes. It is said that there was a time when people were perfect, and lived in a state of happiness and tranquillity. This perfect state lasted for ages, but at last the pristine purity declined and there set in rottenness. Differences of sex manifested themselves, and there appeared distinctions of

1. *AB*, VIII. 12-17.
2. Cf. *HPT*, p. 43.
3. Ibid.

colour. In a word, heavenly life degenerated into earthly life. Now shelter, food and drink were required. People gradually entered into a series of agreements among themselves and set up the institutions of family and property. But this gave rise to a new set of problems, for there appeared theft and other forms of unsocial conduct. Therefore people assembled and agreed to choose as chief a person who was "the best favoured, the most attractive and the most capable." On their request he consented "to be indignant at that where one should be rightly indignant, to censure that which should be rightly censured, to banish him who deserves to be banished."[1] In return they agreed to contribute to him a portion of their paddy. The individual, who was thus elected, came to hold in serial order three titles (*i*) *mahāsammata*, (*ii*) *khattiya*, and (*iii*) *rājā*. According to the text the first means one chosen by the whole people; the second means the lord of the fields; the third means one who charms the people by means of *dharma*.[2]

The speculation made in the *Dīgha Nikāya* is the product of an advanced stage of social development when the tribal society had broken up, giving rise to clash of interests between men and women, between peoples of different races and colours, and between people of unequal wealth. This idea was adumberated in eastern India, where paddy was the chief basis of the economy of the people. Although excavations at Hastināpura take back the existence of paddy in north-east India to about the eighth century B. C.[3] it was only in the age of the Buddha that it had come to be widely cultivated. It is significant that the text does not refer to any other grain except paddy, which was clearly the main crop in the eastern regions. The story of creation gives the impression that one of the chief sources of discord was the hoarding of rice by some people over and above what they required for their consumption, and, what is worse, the stealing of rice fields[4], the repeated occurrence of which is represented to be an important factor leading to the election of the chief. But this political compact is preceded by the establishment of social compact, which markedly distin-

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1. *DN*, iii, 93f.; tr. *SBB*, iv, 88f.
2. Ibid.
3. *Ancient India*, nos. 10 & 11 (1954-5), pp. 131-34.
4. *DN*, iii, 89-92.

guishes the Buddhist contract theory from the one which can be inferred from the Brāhmaṇas. However, the idea of social contract is not presented as pointedly as we find it in the *Śānti Parva*.[1] In the *Dīgha Nikāya* it is evolved in stages, which first refer to the creation of family and then to that of private property. The obligation to respect the family and private rice fields of one another is implied but never stated.[2] But there is no doubt that the idea of social compact accounts for far greater space than that of political compact in the present text.[3]

Political compact as developed in the *Dīgha Nikāya* not only lays a different type of emphasis on the qualifications for election as king but also clearly states the obligations of the two parties. The stress is shifted from the qualities of vigour and strength, as mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, to that of beauty, popularity, attractiveness and ability. In other words physical qualities of aesthetic type are coupled with those of head and heart, which change is obviously due to the Buddhist bias against the use of force and violence. When evil acts are committed the king expresses his displeasure by showing indignation and making censure, but what concrete shape is given to these two is not known. The only definite form of punishment is the banishment of the guilty. Thus on the whole the obligation of the head of the state is negative; he steps in only when people break the established laws. The fanciful etymological explanation of the titles of the elected chief throws further light on the nature of obligations supposed to be carried out by him. The title *khattiya*, which means the lord of fields, suggests that the primary duty of the king is to protect the plots of one against being encroached upon by the other. Further, the title indicates that the king derives his power over land as the representative of the community, which was considered as the owner of land in Vedic times.[4] The first indication of effectual royal ownership over land is to be found in pre-Maurya times, when the early Pāli texts furnish us instances of land grants made by the king to the brāhmaṇas in north-eastern India. Accordingly the contractual relation between the king

1. Infra. pp. 72-75.
2. *DN*, iii, 89-92.
3. Ibid.
4. It seems that no land could be given away without the consent of the *viś* (community). *CHI*, i, 118.

and the people reflects the proprietory right of oligarchy over land. The interpretation of the title *rājā* imposes on the king the positive obligation of charming or pleasing the people. What practical form this should take is not indicated;[1] nor is this specified at the place where the mutual duties of the king and the people are recorded.

In contrast to several obligations of the king, the people are assigned only one duty, namely, to pay a part of their paddy as contribution to the king. The rate of taxation is not prescribed, but the contemporary law-book of Baudhāyana lays down that the king should protect the people in return for one-sixth of the produce.[2] Thus the idea of protection in lieu of taxation was current in the brāhmaṇical circles of pre-Maurya times also. But it is difficult to say whether the brāhmaṇas borrowed it from the Buddhists or *vice versa*. The probable origin of the contractual idea should be sought in the existing political organisation, in which payment of taxes had been made obligatory on the people from the later Vedic period onwards, so that traditions refer to the fleeing of the villagers on account of oppressive taxation.[3]

Originally the agreement takes place between a single kṣatriya on the one hand and the people on the other, but at a later stage it is extended to the kṣatriyas as a class. Towards the end of the story of creation in the *Dīgha Nikāya* it is stated that thus took place the origin of the social circles of the nobles, *khattiya-maṇḍala*.[4] Thus what is described here is not merely the contract between the primordial kṣatriya ruler and the people but the one between the ruling class comprising the kṣatriya oligarchs on the one hand and the non-kṣatriya people on the other. This obviously is intended to justify and strengthen the rule of oligarchies, which we re the order of the day in north-eastern India in the age of the Buddha, by giving them the cloak of popular support and thus sanctioning payment of regular taxes by the people. It is charac-

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1. The Buddhist ruler Aśoka enjoins his *rājukas* not only to award punishments but to confer rewards upon his subjects.
2. I. 10. 18-19.
3. The Jātaka tradition that the people of Dakṣiṇa-Pañcāla fled away to the kingdom of Uttara-Pañcāla on account of too much oppression of their king is recorded in the *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 435-37.
4. *DN*, iii. 93; tr. *SBB*, iii, 88.

teristic of the Buddhist theory of contract that it applies not to a single individual who is the head of the state, as we find it in the case of the theory of the brāhmaṇical *Śānti Parva* or in that of Rousseau, but to individuals who constitute the ruling class.

The obligations imposed on the ruler in our text are impressive, and may lead us to think that they are in line with the republican outlook of the age and the reformist attitude of Buddhism in social and religious matters. But Ghoshal rightly holds that there is no evidence to confirm the impression that this theory was used to exert some measure of popular control on royal power.[1] On the contrary the long account of the disturbed and miserable life of the people is intended to serve as a justification of the kṣatriya rule, monarchical or oligarchical, flourishing in the time of the Buddha. The only limitation proposed on the power of the ruler in this Buddhist contract theory is that he should act according to the Norm or *dharma*, but this does not directly form part of the contract theory. At one place it is stated that the *rājā* pleases the people in accordance with *dharma*.[2] The closing passage of the present account relates that the origin of the *khattiya-maṇḍala*, namely, the ruling oligarchy, took place according to *dharma*, justice or righteousness.[3] Thus, as in the case of Plato's *Republic*, the state is conceived as the fructification of the idea of *dharma* or justice.

The earliest brāhmaṇical exposition of the contract theory of the origin of the state in clear terms occurs in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. Just as in the *Dīgha Nikāya* this theory is propounded incidentally in connection with the refutation of the brāhmaṇa's claim to social supremacy, similarly in the *Arthaśāstra* it is expounded casually in the course of a talk amongst the spies about the nature of royal power.[4] It cannot be regarded as a deliberate and thought-out exposition, as is the case with the theoretical discussion of the seven elements of the state. Nevertheless, in the terms of contract it introduces certain new elements which are absent in the

1. *HPT*, p. 121.
2. *DN*, iii, 93.
3. Ibid.
4. *AŚ*, I. 13.

Dīgha Nikāya. It states that overtaken by a state of anarchy the people elected Manu Vaivasvata as their king and undertook to pay 1/6 of their grain, and 1/10 of their articles of merchandise in addition to a portion of their gold. In return for these taxes the king guaranteed social welfare to the people by undertaking to suppress acts of mischief, afflicting the guilty with taxes and coercion. Even the inhabitants of the forest were required to give him $\frac{1}{6}$ of the forest produce. This account of the origin of the state closes with the moral that the king should not be disregarded.

The Kauṭilyan speculation is in keeping with an advanced economy, when the different kinds of grain were produced so that the king laid claim not only to an unspecified part of paddy but also to a fixed part of all kinds of grain produce. Similarly trade had been established as a regular source of income to the state, for both Megasthenes and Kauṭilya refer to officers regulating trade in this period. Besides, mining was a thriving industry in the Maurya age; probably on account of this provision is made for payment of a part of *hiraṇya*, which covers not only gold but gold and similar other precious metals. Finally, the fact that even the inhabitants of the forest are not exempted from taxes is an indication of the all-comprehensive character of the Maurya state. Thus taken as a whole the first three taxes, namely, those in grain, commodities and metals, reflect the developed economy of the Maurya period, and all the four taxes mentioned in the terms of contract made between the mythical Manu and the people betray to some extent the elaborate taxation system and the increasingly acquisitive character of the Maurya state.

The contractual origin of kingship in the *Arthaśāstra* is not intended to impose limitations on royal power. On the contrary the obligations put upon the people are burdensome and are designed to strengthen royal authority . This point is clearly brought out towards the close of the passage which describes the contract theory of the origin of kingship. It is argued that the king, who assures security and well-being to his subjects by eliminating wrongful acts through coercion and taxes, should never be disregarded. Hence in the case of Kauṭilya also the contract theory is purported to buttress royal

power as in the case of Hobbes, rather than to limit it as in the case of Locke.

The next stage in the history of the contract theory of the origin of the state is indicated by the *Mahāvastu*, a biography of the Buddha written in the first century B. C. in, what is regarded by some scholars, Buddhist-Hybrid Sanskrit. Such is the force of sectarian tradition in ancient India that although this biography seems to have been removed from the *Dīgha Nikāya* by about three hundred years, while, expounding the contract theory of the origin of kingship, it reproduces the greater part of the story of creation recorded in the earlier text. For instance, it refers to the ideal state of life in the beginning followed by degeneration leading to the establishment of family and property by a series of agreements, finally cemented by the foundation of the state as a result of the election of the most gracious and mighty as the king, who is known as the *mahāsammata*.[1] But there are some significant differences in regard to the terms of contract, which are enlarged by this text directly and indirectly. On the request of the people the king undertakes not only to punish those who deserve punishment, but, what is a new obligation, to cherish those who deserve to be cherished. This element of rewarding the good is not noticeable in the earlier speculations, although Aśoka underlines it in his instructions to his officers. Perhaps the idea owes its origin to the Buddhist ruler, but we do not know whether it was actually practised unless it be the various kinds of grants made to the religious sects and priests. At any rate the obligation of the king to reward the good is directly stated in this text. Further, the two new titles applied to the king in the present source give some indication of his other obligations. The king is designated *mūrdhnābhiṣikta* (consecrated head), for he properly protects and carefully guards his people.[2] He is called *jānapadasthāmavīryaprāpta* (one who has attained the security of his realm), for he is established among the people of the town and countryside as their parents.[3] Curiously

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1. *Mahāvastu*, i, 343 ff.
2. *samyak rakṣati paripāleti mūrdhnābhiṣiktaḥ...saṅjñā udapāsi*. Ibid. i, 348.
3. *mātāpitṛsamo naigamajānapadeṣu tti jānapadasthāmavīryaprāpto ti saṅjñā udapāsi*. Ibid.

enough the title *rājā* in this text is explained as suggesting that the king is entitled to a share in the produce of paddy.[1] This title therefore indicates the right of the king rather than his duty towards the people, whose obligation towards the king is stipulated earlier in very clear terms. In return for this pledge on the part of the king the people promise to pay him one-sixth of the produce of the paddy fields, a rate which has been specified in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and is in consonance with that given by Kauṭilya. Although it is a period of thriving trade and the king is represented as attending to the interests of the inhabitants of the urban and rural areas, there is no mention of taxes on commodities. This is explicable if we assume that in a biography of the Buddha the writer tries to be faithful to the conditions of the age when the great teacher lived. But even the *Mahāvastu* unwittingly reflects the political practices of the time when it was compiled. For it gives us the genealogy of the successor of the first elected king Sammata for several generations,[2] suggesting thereby that kingship was ordinarily regarded as hereditary. It is also because of this that the element of election is retained, for the brāhmaṇical chapters on polity in Manu and the *Śānti Parva*, compiled in the period when hereditary monarchy had become the rule, do not refer to the election of the king.

Regarding the origin of kingship, the *Śānti Parva* contains two speculations, both of which may be interpreted as embodying elements of the contract theory of the origin of the state. We do not know whether these two suppositions were incorporated into the section on *rājadharma* at the same time, for, as will be shown later, their objects seem to have been widely divergent. The first occurs in the 59th chapter, which begins with a long discussion on the importance of *daṇḍa* and *daṇḍanīti*. It is stated there that Viṣṇu created a son born out of his mind to undertake the responsibility of administration, but he and several of his descendants renounced the world ultimately leading to the tyrannical rule of Vena.[3] The sages (*ṛṣis*) put an end to the life of this ruler, and created out of his right thigh Pṛthu, who was the eighth in descent from Viṣṇu. By means of a

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. *ŚP*, 59. 94-99.

contract, the sages clearly laid down the conditions on which Pṛthu Vainya would hold the throne. The sages asked him to swear that he would rule according to the principles of *daṇḍanīti*, that he would consider the brāhmaṇas above punishment and that he would save the world from the intermixture of castes.[1] At this Pṛthu promised the deities headed by the *ṛṣis* that he would always worship the highly blessed brāhmaṇas, the bull among men.[2] Earlier he had assured that he would do whatever is proper and in accordance with the science of polity.[3]

Although the contract does not take place with the original ruler, the writer seems to convey that real kingship began with Pṛthu, after whom the whole world (*pṛthivī*) was named. It is significant that the contract does not take place with the people but with the brāhmaṇas, who claim special privileges and protection from the king. There is nothing to prove the contention of Jayaswal that to the royal oath the people pronounced 'Amen' (*evamastu*).[4] The pledge is clearly administered by the deities and the great sages *paramarṣayaḥ*[5], who speak 'Amen' when it has been taken by the king.[6] By no stretch of imagination can they be considered as representing the whole people. King Pṛthu does not repeat the whole oath, but he states it in unequivocal terms that he would always respect the brāhmaṇas. This theoretical recognition of the special position of the brāhmaṇas in the contract is a measure of their increasing importance in post-Maurya and Gupta times, when several brāhmaṇical dynasties such as those of the Śuṅgas, Kaṇvas, Sātavāhanas, Vākāṭakas, etc., were ruling in the country and brāhmaṇism had reasserted itself, ultimately leading to its efflorescence under the Guptas. In the same context by way of further explanation we are given a fanciful etymological derivation of the term kṣatriya, which is interpreted to mean one who protects the brāhmaṇas from wounds.[7] The only concession to royal obligation towards the

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1. Ibid., 59. 100-14.
2. Ibid., 59. 115.
3. Ibid., 59. 108.
4. *Hindu Polity*, p. 225.
5. *ŚP*, 59. 109.
6. Ibid., 59. 128.
7. Ibid.

people is contained in a similar elucidation of the term *rājā*, which is interpreted to mean one who delights the subjects.[1]

The second speculation regarding the origin of the state occurring in the 67th chapter of the *Śānti Parva* can be clearly taken as envisaging the contract theory of the origin of the state. It embodies theories of both social and political contract. It is stated that in ancient days when anarchy was rampant, people made an agreement among themselves. According to this they undertook to abandon one who speaks much, is cruel in acts, encroaches on other's property, and violates woman's chastity. Clearly this was a social agreement to maintain the institutions of family and property, an agreement which is not recorded in the Buddhist texts in such lucid terms.

The next stage in the rise of the state is indicated by the formulation of political compact. It is stated that the people did not observe the contract (*samaya*), with the result that they fell on very bad days. And hence they approached Brahmā for a lord (*īśvara*) whom they would together worship and who would therefore protect them. Brahmā asked Manu to undertake the work of governing them, but he refused because it would be an onerous task to rule over the wicked and untruthful people. The people, however, overcame his reluctance by promising to pay him 1/50 of the cattle, 1/50 of gold and 1/10 of grain for increasing his treasury (*kośavardhanam*).[2] They further promised that those who would become the foremost in the use of weapons would follow Manu like the deities following Indra.[3] In return they sought the protection of the king and further assured that one-fourth of spiritual merit, which the subjects protected by the king would earn, would accrue to the king. Manu agreed and with a great army started for the conquest of all quarters.

The important element common to the two theories in the *Śānti Parva* is the fact that none of them, unlike the Buddhist theory, refers to the election of the king. On the contrary they ascribe the origin of kingship to divine agencies such as Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Thus the element of election, which is notice-

1. Ibid., 59. 127.
2. *ŚP*, 67. 19-23.
3. Ibid., 67. 24.

able in the Brāhmaṇas and Kauṭilya, is eliminated in the *Śānti Parva*. In this sense the theories of the origin of the king may be regarded as anti-popular in origin.[1] There is, however, clear difference of objective between the two theories in the present text. While the earlier theory is intended to place limitations on the power of the king in the interests of the priestly class, the later is calculated to emphasise the power of the king. This can be inferred from the context, in which the evils arising out of the kinglessness are enumerated in detail. Moreover, the obligations imposed on the subjects are very many in contrast to those imposed on the king. Out of the taxes mentioned in this text two are in gold and grain, also found in Kauṭilya. But the tax on commodities in Kauṭilya is paralleled by the tax on cattle wealth here.[2] What is more important here, we have a new tax promised to the king, namely the king's share in the spiritual merit earned by his subjects. We do not know whether it refers to the merit earned by the brāhmaṇas in particular. But this second speculation, which seems to justify royal power, was probably the product of some kṣatriya school in contrast to the first speculation, which, since it stresses the brāhmaṇical power, may have been the product of some brāhmaṇa school.

A striking element in the second speculation on contract in the *Śānti Parva* is the provision for military service by the best warriors among the people. Some other readings of the relevant verses of this source also refer to the people's offer of a beautiful maiden to the king, although this does not occur in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*. These remind us of the obligations of the vassals of Samudra Gupta. At any rate it is clear that the provision for military service reflects some semi-feudal practice of the Gupta period. From the viewpoint of the ancient Indian definition of the state, the second contract theory should be regarded as the most adequate theory on the origin of the state. It involves the king and people, who respectively correspond to the *svāmī* and the *janapada*. The people's obligations to pay taxes and render military service

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1. *HPT*, p. 173.
2. As to gold and animals the rate is exactly the same as in Manu, but the rate of one-tenth in grain is much lower than in the *Arthaśāstra* and *Mahāvastu*, and might reflect an earlier practice.

to the king clearly imply the presence of the elements of *kośa* and *daṇḍa*. Thus four important elements of the state out of seven can be distinctly discerned in the statement of the contract theory of the origin of the state in the 67th chapter of the *Śānti Parva*.

Although the Gupta period was prolific in the production of varied types of literature, it cannot boast of any fruitful contribution to the contract theory of the origin of the state, unless it be the chapters on this topic in the *Śānti Parva*, which may have been finally compiled during this period. The two lawgivers, Nārada and Bṛhaspati, speak of an ideal state of affairs in the beginning followed by social chaos leading to the establishment of government.[1] But they do not throw any light on the contract theory of the origin of the state.

Our survey would show that the Buddhist texts attach more weight to the contract theory of the origin of the state and discuss it in a more systematic fashion. But it would be too much to say, as Ghoshal does, that the "the Buddhist theory of contract virtually exists as an isolated phenomenon in the history of political thought.[2]" We have seen how the germs of this theory are found in the Brāhmaṇas, and its developed forms in the *Śānti Parva*. Ghoshal himself admits that the principle of taxation in return for protection is one of the root ideas of Hindu political philosophy.[3] He holds that the Kauṭilyan theory is a brāhmaṇised adaptation of the Buddhist theory of contract.[4] Such a possibility cannot be altogether ignored, but there is no evidence of exchange of ideas between the two schools or of the Kauṭilyan borrowing from the *Dīgha Nikāya*. We do not know whether the theory elaborated in the *Śānti Parva* (Ch. 67) owes anything to Buddhist influence, although the very term *Book of Peace* smacks of the spirit of non-violence. At any rate it is evident that in this text the contract theory is more systematic and elaborate than what we find in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, with the result that the two stages of social and political compact are clearly defined here.

The contract theory of the origin of the state should be

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1. *Nārada* (*SBE*), I. 1-2; *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*), I. 1.
2. *HPT*, p. 121.
3. Ibid., pp. 120-21.
4. Ibid., p. 135.

regarded as an original contribution of ancient Indian thinkers to political thought, for even the Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle, who had established political science practically as an independent discipline, did not think in terms of contract between the king and the people. Plato points out in the *Republic* that when even three or four people come together for the satisfaction of their mutual needs that leads to the rise of the state. This therefore implies some idea of social compact. In the *Laws*, however, while enunciating his view of history, Plato points out that in the beginning people lived at peace in a natural age. Then he refers to degeneration leading to the rise of the kingdom. But after the laws had been established and the state created, in each of the Dorian kingdoms people took oath in accordance with the common laws equally binding on the rulers and ruled.[1] Thus the oath followed the rise of the state and was not a preceding condition of its rise, and hence it cannot be interpreted as implying the contract theory of the origin of the state. Perhaps the origin of the contract theory in India may be attributed to the prevalence of oligarchical rule in the age of the Buddha, although Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau conceived of this theory under monarchical rule, either with the object of justifying it or with that of limiting or overthrowing it.

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1. *Laws* (The Loeb Classical Library), i, 191.

CHAPTER VI

VIDATHA : THE EARLIEST FOLK-ASSEMBLY OF THE INDO-ARYANS

Although much has been written to elucidate the nature of the Vedic assemblies *sabhā* and *samiti*, scant attention has been paid to the study of the *vidatha*, an important Vedic institution.[1] Its importance will appear from the fact that, while the terms *sabhā* and *samiti* are mentioned respectively only eight and nine times in the *Ṛg Veda*, the term *vidatha* is mentioned 122 times. Similarly in the *Atharva Veda* the terms *sabhā* and *samiti* occur respectively seventeen and thirteen times, but the term *vidatha* occurs twenty-two times.

There are ten occurrences of the term *vidatha* in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, twenty-one in the Brāhmaṇas, and one in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. The Vedic literature is replete with references to the *vidatha*, but those to the *sabhā* and *samiti* are few and far between. Moreover, references to the *sabhā* and *samiti* are few in the *Ṛg Veda*, but there is a relative increase in their number in the *Atharva Veda* in the same way just as there is a relative decrease in the number of the occurrences of the term *vidatha* in it. This shows that as an institution the *vidatha* was more important in the Ṛg Vedic period, and the *sabhā* and *samiti* gained prominence during the period of the later *Saṃhitās*. Numerous mentions of *vidatha* in the earliest literature lend to it a significance which needs careful examination.

There are about half a dozen views regarding the meaning and interpretation of the word *vidatha*[2]. Since the word can be derived from the root *vid*, which means respectively to know, to possess, to consider and to exist,[3] it has been possible to ascribe the meaning of knowledge, possession (or house according to Bloomfield) and assembly to it. Oldenberg derives

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1. In *HCIP*, i, *The Vedic Age*, the latest work on the Vedic period, the term *vidatha* has not even been mentioned.

2. They have been summarised in *Vedic Index*, ii, 296 and in U. N. Ghoshal, *History of Hindu Public Life*, pt. I, p. 28.

3. *vid jñāne, vid cāraṇe vidlṛ lābhe, vid sattāyām. Śabdakalpadruma*, iv, 286.

the term *vidatha* from the root *vi-dhā* and thinks its original meaning to be "distribution, disposition and ordinance," and its derivative meaning "sacrifice".

Vedic scholars tend to emphasise one or the other meaning of the term *vidatha* and to impose the same on all passages. But in view of the undifferentiated nature of the functions of the primitive assemblies perhaps a proper course would be to fall in line with Roth, who seems to make a synthesis of various views and concludes that the *vidatha* was an assembly meant for secular, religious and military purposes. Following him Jayaswal thinks that the *vidatha* was probably "the parent folk-assembly from which the *sabhā*, *samiti* and *senā* differentiated.[1]" Although there is no direct evidence to establish the institutional connection between the *vidatha* on the one hand, and the *sabhā* and *samiti* on the other, a scrutiny of the mass of the occurrences of the word in different contexts would show prominent traces of the earliest folk-assembly in the *vidatha*. Proceeding on the basis that there should be similarity between the life of the primitive people known to anthropology and that of ancient people known to history it is possible to elucidate and supplement the obscure references to the *vidatha* in the Vedic literature and to get an approximately correct picture of its composition and functions.

As regards its composition the one characteristic feature, which distinguished the *vidatha* from the *sabhā* and *samiti*, is the frequent association of woman with it. The *Ṛg Veda* only once indicates the connection of woman with the *sabhā*. She is described as worthy of going to the *sabhā*.[2] There is little to show that she sat on the *samiti*. Even in respect of the *sabhā* the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* shows that she ceased to attend it in later times[3]. But the Ṛk and Atharvan collections, taken together, furnish at least seven references, testifying not only to woman's attendance in the *vidatha* but also to her participation in its deliberations, although no such reference is to be found in the Brāhmaṇas. The *Ṛg Veda* informs us

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1. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 21.
2. *RV*, 1. 167.3.
3. *MS*, VI. 7.41.

that the *yoṣā* went to the *vidatha*.[1] Grown-up men are described as installing strong and social maiden for the sake of good in the *vidatha*.[2] It appears that the woman member was not a mute participant in the affairs of the assembly. Thus *Sūryā* is instructed to speak to the assembled people in the *vidatha*.[3] We learn further that women took part in the deliberations of the *vidatha*. A desire is expressed in the marriage ceremony that the bride may not only figure as a housewife but having control she may speak to the *vidatha* (council).[4] Again it is said that she may speak to the *vidatha* in her advanced age.[5]

This should not be taken to mean that woman got undue preference over man. Even with regard to man the same desire of speaking to the *vidatha* (council) in advanced age is repeated.[6] So in the deliberative functions of the *vidatha* woman enjoyed an equal voice with man. References therefore make it clear that the meeting of this body was attended by woman as well, and that it was a sort of assembly. Sometimes in these cases the term *vidatha* has been understood in the sense of house, but there does not seem to be much sense in desiring for woman's speaking in the house and still less sense in man's speaking there. Further, at one place, the bride is asked to come to the house (*gṛha*) and speak in the *vidatha*,[7] which distinguishes the one from the other. Therefore probably in all these references the *vidatha* means a family council. It may be compared to the council of the Iroquois[8], which generally served as "the democratic assembly of all adult male and female members of the gens, all with equal voice.[9]" In this respect the *vidatha* was completely different from the

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1. *guhā carantī manuṣo na yoṣā sabhāvatī vidathyeva sam vāk. RV*, 1. 167.3.
2. *āsthāpayanta yuvatim yuvānaḥ śubhe nimiślām vidatheṣu pajrām. RV*, 1. 167. 6.
3. *gṛhāngaccha gṛhapatnīyathāsovaśinī tvam vidathamāvadāsdi. RV*, X. 85.26.
4. *AV*, XIV. 1. 20 repeats exactly the same hymn as *RV*, X. 85. 26.
5. *enā patyātanvam saṃsṛjasvādhā jivrīvidathamāvadāthaḥ. RV*, X. 85 27; *AV*, XIV. 1. 21. There is a slight variation in the *AV* hymn.
6. *AV*, VIII. 1. 6.
7. *RV*, X. 85. 26.
8. A league of five (later six) tribes which inhabited New York State.
9. F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 126. Among the Andaman islanders "the affairs of the community are regulated entirely by the older men and women." Radcliff Brown, *Andaman Islanders*, p. 44, quoted in Landman, *Origin of the Inequality of Social Classes* p. 312.

earliest known Greek, Roman and German popular assemblies, in which woman did not find any place. But the old Welsh laws, not later than the eleventh century A.D., show that woman had the right to vote at the popular assemblies[1]. So far as the Indo-Āryans are concerned, if we assume that matriarchy preceded patriarchy, it will have to be admitted that the *vidatha* is an institution of the highest antiquity.

By citing certain passages from the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (iv. 7.4: 97.15) and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (iii.24.7-*Gopatha Br.*,ii.3.22) Bloomfield seeks to prove that even in early times woman had nothing to do with public assembly or life and that she did not attend the *sabhā*[2]. But these passages are the products of a later period, when the patriarchal society had been established on a firm footing and woman was fast losing her old importance. As such they cannot apply to the earliest period represented by the Ṛk and Atharvan collections. In subsequent times women were relegated to the background in the conduct of public affairs. Still the *vidatha* tradition of woman's share in public affairs can be traced in the place given to her in thc list of the ratnins. The list given in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.7.3) consists of twelve ratnins, of whom three, namely, *mahiṣī*, *vāvātā* and *parivṛkti*, are women. It seems that in this case one fourth of those whose voice and support counts in the consecration of the king consists of women.

It is generally recognised that in the early stage of social development most institutions were tribal in nature. The tribal element is to be found in the case of the *sabhā* and *samiti*. While the corresponding words for *sabhā* in several Indo-European languages mean the assembly of the kin[3], there is a clear reference to the *viś* sitting in the *samiti*[4]. As regards the *vidatha* there is no direct proof of its tribal character. In one passage, however, the people assembled in the *vidathas* are described as praising Agni's splendour and Maruts' might in *gaṇas*[5]. This seems to suggest that people assembled there in tribal groups. The tribal nature of the *gaṇa* is evident from the fact that

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1. Engels, op. cit. , p. 188.
2. *JAOS*, xix, 14.
3. Brugmann, *Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Germanic Languages*, i, 395.
4. *RV*, X. 173. 1.
5. *vrātaṃvrātaṃ gaṇaṃgaṇaṃ suśastibhiragnerbhāmaṃ marutāmoja īmahe, pṛṣadśvāso anavabhrarādhaso gantāro yajñaṃ vidatheṣu dhīrāḥ. RV*, III, 26. 6.

the Maruts, who are repeatedly mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda* and *Atharva Veda* as a *gaṇa* and according to a later source number sixty-three[1], are described as the sons of Rudra. Therefore the association of the *gaṇas* with the *vidatha* shows indirectly the latter's tribal character,—a feature which does not appear to be unlikely in the earliest phase of human history.

Since the *vidatha* was an assembly, there are references to its deliberative functions. We learn that people aspired for talking big there.[2] The householder prayed for warding off death so that living he could speak to the council.[3] It seems that in the deliberations of the *vidatha* advanced age received some weightage,—a characteristic which is generally found in primitive assemblies. Remarkably enough the function of debate appears to have been exercised by the Vedic assemblies, the *vidatha*, the *sabhā* and *samiti*, but is not to be found in the early popular assemblies of the other Indo-European peoples.

What was the subject of deliberations can be known only vaguely. According to Oldenberg one of the meanings of the term *vidatha* is the "act of disposing of any business" or the like. This meaning appears in well known passages "may we with valiant men mightily raise our voice at the determining (of ordinance)"[4]. There seems to be some sense in this, for Mitra-Varuṇa are described as directing the thoughts of the three gatherings in the sky, air and earth. They are described as strengthening the law.[5] At another place Agni, who comes to the *vidatha*, is described as an ordainer.[6] This shows that as an assembly it probably made laws and ordinances for the regulation of the affairs of the tribe. We may therefore presume that the *vidatha* transacted the tribal business which is typical of primitive assemblies.

Again in the opinion of Oldenberg another meaning of the term *vidatha* is distribution[7], for which we find some basis in the texts. According to a passage from the kernel of the *Ṛg*

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1. *ŚB*, II. 5. 1. 12.
2. *AV*, XIII. 3. 24.
3. *AV*, XII. 2. 30; VII. 1. 6.
4. *SBE*, xlvi, 26.
5. *RV*, VII. 66. 10.
6. *RV*, III. 14. 1.
7. *SBE*, xlvi, 26.

Veda members summoned in the *vidatha* are instructed to be present on the occasion of the distribution of whatever is produced daily by Savitar.[1] At another place Agni is described as the liberal distributor of produces in the *vidatha*.[2] It is worthy of remark that the distribution of produces was an important function of the primitive assemblies. Till recent times there prevailed among the tribal people the practice that whatever game was obtained by an individual was not solely appropriated by him but shared together with his neighbours.[3] We can therefore well presume that the people assembled in the *vidatha* made distribution of what they procured as food. Another reference of almost the same kind suggests a tendency towards individual accumulation. A sacrificer is described as moving with his chariot "first in rank and wealthy, munificent and lauded in assemblies (*vidatheṣu*)"[4]. In this respect the *vidatha* stands in sharp contrast to the *sabhā* and *samiti*, of the distributive functions of which we have no instance. In the case of the Vedic *gaṇa*, however, we have a reference, which suggests communal appropriation of the wealth captured in war[5].

How this distribution was made in the *vidatha* is not clear. Probably the only reference, which hints at the nature of distribution effected, is the one which states that the *dhīras* (brave) in the assemblies do not diminish the portions due to the mighty Agni.[6] This may indicate two things. Either the portions were offered to the gods first and then distributed among the members or they were distributed among the gods there. Whatever might be the mode of distribution this much is beyond doubt that one who was mighty in the *vidatha* received more share. This hints at unequal distribution.

Probably most Ṛg Vedic references to the *vidatha*, as many as about two dozen, point to its military nature. Some of them show that an important subject for discussion in the assembly was the exploits of the heroes. The *vidatha*

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1. *yadadyadevaḥ savitāsuvātisyāmāsya ratninovibhāge. RV*, VII. 40. 1.
2. *tvam agne rājā varuṇo...tvam aryamā satpatiryasya saṃbhujaṃ tvam aṃśo vidathe deva bhājayuḥ. RV*, II. 1. 4.
3. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, i, 17.
4. *sa revānyāti prathamo rathena vasudāvāvidatheṣu praśastaḥ. RV*, II. 27. 12
5. Infra, Ch. VIII.
6. *agne yahvasya tava bhāgadheyaṃ na pra minanti vidatheṣu dhīrāḥ. RV*, III. 28-4.

discussed the conquering might of Agni[1], and invocations made to the various gods describe the *vidatha* as full of heroes. There are at least twenty-one hymns in the *Ṛg Veda* which end with the verse "with brave sons (or heroes) in the assembly (*vidatha*) may we speak aloud".[2] In these passages the word for son, namely *vīra*, came to be identical with *brave one*, which betrays the military nature of the Vedic tribe in which sons were valued because of their usefulness in war. The main military function of the *vidatha* may have been to conduct the tribal war against the hostile tribes, a phenomenon which was natural in the earliest stage of the Indo-Āryan history. It is well-known that primitive tribes consider themselves in a state of perpetual war with a tribe with which they have not concluded terms of peace. That is why members of the Iroquois gens were bound to give one another assistance, protection and particularly support in avenging injuries inflicted by outsiders.[3]

That the *vidatha* conducted its military operations under some war-chief can possibly be inferred from several passages. At one place Indra is called the might of the *vidatha*, and at another the lord of heroes leading the people to the *vidatha*.[4] Pūṣan is described as the hero of the *vidatha*, and Agni's will is represented like that of a sovereign in an assembly.[5] These divine chiefs seem to have been the reflections of human chiefs. How the chief was appointed is difficult to determine. However two references show that Agni, frequently described as the priest, was elected in the *vidatha*. According to one passage Agni, the *hotṛ* priest who makes the assembly full, is elected at sacrificial offerings by the great and small alike.[6] Another passage states that the arrangers elect Agni as their priest in the sacred gatherings.[7] The sense of consent in accepting Agni

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1. *RV*, VI. 8. 1.

2. *bṛhad vadema vidathe suvirāḥ*. *RV*, II. 1. 16; 2. 13; 11. 21; 13. 13; 14. 12; 15. 10; 16. 9; 17. 9; 18. 9; 19.9; 20.9; 23.19; 24. 16; 27. 17; 28. 11; 29. 7; 33. 15; 35. 15; I. 117. 25; II. 12. 15; VIII. 48. 14.

3. F. Engels, op. cit., p. 124

4. *patiṃ dakṣasya vidathasya*. *RV*, I. 56. 2; 130. 1.

5. *RV*, VII. 36. 8; IV. 21. 2.

6. *medhākāraṃ vidathasyaprasādanaṃ agniṃ hotāraṃ paribhūtamaṃ matim, tamid arbhe haviṣyāsamānamittaminmahevṛṇatenānyaṃtvat*. *RV*, X. 91. 2.

7. *tvāmidatra vṛṇate tvāyavo hotāram agne vidatheṣu vedhasaḥ*. *RV*, X. 91. 9.

as priest is found in another hymn, which declares that gods and men have made Agni their chief support.[1]

Thus it is obvious that Agni, the chief priest, was elected in the *vidatha*. We have no indication how Indra was made the hero or the war-chief of the *vidatha*. But generally in primitive societies no distinction can be made between the war-chief and the priest—in many cases the same person combining both offices. The evidence in ancient India is not strong but not altogether wanting. We have the case of Viśvāmitra, a rājanya of the Bharata and Kauśika families[2], who acted as the priest of king Sudās[3] and as *hotṛ* priest at a sacrifice of Hariścandra.[4] Similarly Devāpi, the priest of king Śantanu,[5] is represented by Yāska[6] as the elder brother of Śantanu. All this might suggest that at one stage in Vedic India also the functions of the chief and the priest were exercised by the same person. Hence it would not be untenable to hold that the war-chief was also elected by the people assembled in the *vidatha*. This is further corroborated by anthropological evidence. For the council of the Iroquois gens, which was a "democratic assembly" consisting of all men and women members, elected and deposed the *sachems* and chiefs, and it also elected the Keepers of Faith who exercised religious functions.[7] Had there been no real election of the war-chiefs in the *vidatha* in early times, the tradition would not have been carried down to the age of the *samiti* and continued in the form of various formalities observed in the coronation ceremonies described in the Brāhmaṇas.[8]

In point of number, next to its military nature, references point to the religious character of the *vidatha*. Its religious aspect appeared so predominant and all-pervading to Śāyaṇa that he explained the term *vidatha* as *yajña* or sacrifice. But it would be as improper to equate *vidatha* with *yajña* in all Vedic passages on this basis as to equate the *samiti* with battle[9] or sacrifice

1. *RV*, X. 92. 2.
2. *RV*, III. 53. 9-12.
3. *RV*, III. 53. 11.
4. *AB*, VII. 16.
5. *RV*, X. 98. 7.
6. *Nirukta*, II. 10.
7. Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 85.
8. Infra., Ch. XI.
9. *Nighaṇṭu*, II. 17.

on the basis oī Yāska.[1] The meaning of sacrifice assigned to *vidatha* may be true of some passages, but it cannot suit other passages in which *vidatha* and *yajña* are put as exclusive and independent words.[2] For instance, in a passage Heaven and Earth are praised with sacrifices (*yajñaiḥ*) in the assemblies (*vidatheṣu*).[3] In another passage Indra and Varuṇa are invoked "to make our sacrifice (*yajñam*) fair amid the assemblies (*vidatheṣu*).[4]" These passages, which distinguish between *vidatha* and *yajña*, can be supplemented by some others of a similar type.[5] In this connection we may take into account the arguments, by which Bloomfield rejects the meaning of the term *vidatha* as sacrifice.[6] But, as will be shown later, his assertion that the *vidatha* was the patriarchal house does not seem to be convincing. Meanwhile it is worthwhile to state that in all cases it would not be correct to render the term *vidatha* as sacrifice.

This is not to argue against its religious character, which is inextricably mixed with the worldly aspects of the *vidatha*. The institution undoubtedly provided common ground to the whole folk for the worship of their gods. Agni, who is described as going on his embassy between both the gathering places (*vidathas*) of heaven and earth, seems to have been the centre of this worship[7]. People assembled in the gathering place also worshipped Indra, Mitra-Varuṇa, Viśvedevas and other gods.[8] It is significant that the worship performed in the *vidatha* is conducted in a collective manner, and blessings are sought for all the people. People seem to extend joint invitation to the gods for attending their sacrifices. For instance, the Maruts are invited to refresh themselves in "our" *vidatha*.[9] There is no manifestation of the desire of adding to one's wealth and progeny at the

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1. Quoted in Bandyopadhaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, pp. 118-19.
2. Griffith, whose translation has been generally accepted in this chapter, translates *vidatha* variously as synod, assembly, gathering and sacrifice. Whitney renders it as council.
3. *pradyāvā yajñaiḥ pṛthivī ṛtāvṛdhā mahi stuṣe vidatheṣu pracetasā. RV*, I. 159. 1.
4. *kṛtaṃ no yajñaṃ vidatheṣu...RV*, VII. 84. 3.
5. *RV*, III. 4. 5; 26. 6.
6. *JAOS*, xli, 204-6.
7. *RV*, VIII. 39. 1.
8. *RV*, III. 1. 18; 14. 1; I. 130. 1; 153. 3.
9. *asmākam adya vidatheṣu bahiḥ ā vītaye sadata pipriyāṇāḥ RV*. VII. 57. 2.

cost of others. Thus Savitar, who is invited to come to "*our synod*", is invoked to gladden "*all our people*" through "*our hymn.*"[1] Likewise, when Agni is being lauded in the assembly he is asked to "give us wealth with stores of heroes and mighty strength in food and noble offspring."[2] In another passage Indra is invoked to bless the people assembled in the *vidatha* with wealth.[3]

Most allusions to the *vidatha* from the *Atharva Veda* show that this institution continued to function primarily as a religious body in subsequent times. In this text gods are regarded as its maintainers,[4] and they are invoked in its meeting.[5] In one passage it is regarded as a heaven-gaining instrument,[6] and Agni acts as its *hotṛ* priest.[7]

Gods were worshipped in two ways. One was the common method of inviting them to sit on the sacred grass and to request them to share in the food and banquet provided by the assembly. Agni is asked to enjoy the sacrificial cake in the *vidatha*;[8] similarly Maruts are asked to accept sacrifices offered there.[9] Generally these were collective offerings made to the deity, and in this sense the *vidatha* served as a sacrificial institution. The second method of worshipping gods was to sing their praises in the assembly. In some cases the sacred food offered to the god takes the form of praises.[10] Several references indicate that the *vidatha* was the scene of singing. Singers assembled there and sang prayers in honour of the gods. Indra, the might of the *vidatha*, received in large measure the songs of praise.[11] Agni, who filled the *vidatha* hall, conserved the holy acts of the singers.[12] The gods were besung in the

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1. *ā na ilābhirvidathe suśasti viśvānaraḥ savitā deva eitu, api yathā ā yuvāno matsathā no viśvaṃ jagadbhipitve manīṣā. RV*, I. 186. 1.

2. *vidathe manma śaṃsi, asme agne saṃyadvīraṃ bṛhantaṃ kṣumantaṃ bājaṃ svapatyaṃ rayiṃ dāḥ. RV*, II. 4. 8.

3. *asmabhyaṃ tadvaso dānāya rādhaḥ samarthayasva bahu te vasavyaṃ, indra yaccitraṃ śravasyā anu dyūnvṛhadvadema vidathe suvirāḥ. RV*, II. 13. 13.

4. *AV*, VII. 73 (77). 4.
5. *AV*, VIII. 3. 19.
6. *AV*, XVII. 1. 15.
7. *AV*, XVIII. 1. 20.
8. *RV*, III. 28. 4.
9. *RV*, III. 26. 4: I. 166. 2.
10. *RV*, 1. 186. 1.
11. *sthūrasya rāyo bṛhato ya īśe tamuṣṭavāma vidatheṣvindram. RV*, IV. 21. 4.
12. *RV*, X. 122. 8; II. 4. 8.

vidatha, so that they might be merciful to the devotees.[1] Such being the importance of singing, priests were invoked to assume the role of singers to inspire the people in the assemblies.[2]

The *vidatha* was not only the scene of singing but probably also of drinking and sports. Soma is described as "driving the drops, at our assemblies", which shows that the people enjoyed the *soma* drink in the *vidatha*.[3] It is said that the Maruts play sports in their gatherings.[4] which were evidently conceived on the basis of gatherings of human beings. This suggests that the *vidatha* served as the playground for the people assembled there. Besides, it was an assembly in which the simple folk discussed the virtues of horse,[5] just as they dilated upon the virtues of cow in the *sabhā*. They also sang about the merits of the chariot wrought by Vibhvan.[6] All this shows that the *vidatha* met in a homely atmosphere, and was in line with primitive tribal assemblies which are characterised by singing and playing and the observance of festivals and religious ceremonies.

As a key to the understanding of the sacred character of the *vidatha* we may refer in particular to the religious functions of the early assemblies of the Indo-European peoples. Each of the thirty curies, which together constituted the sovereign tribal assembly of Rome, had its peculiar worship. and chapel.[7] But in course of time some of these tribal assemblies lost their worldly functions to other institutions and retained only their religious character. Speaking of tribal assemblies in Sweden, Chadwick says. "They appear to have been primarily religious gaherings, for the great annual sacrifices at the chief national sanctuary. It is more than probable that such was the case also with the assemblies of the ancient Germans."[8]

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1. *AV*, I. 13. 4; V. 12. 7.
2. *RV*, X. 110. 7.
3. *RV*, IX. 97. 56.
4. *krīḍanti krīḍā vidatheṣu ghṛṣvayaḥ, nakṣanti rudrā avasā namasvinam.... RV*, 1. 166. 2.
5. *RV*, 1. 162. 1.
6. *vibhvataṣṭo vidatheṣu pravācyo yaṃ devāso'vathā sa vicarṣaṇiḥ. RV*, IV. 36. 5.
7. William Smith, *A Smaller History of Rome from the earliest times to the death of Trajan*, p. 18.
8. H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, p. 169.

Bloomfield does not accept the collective nature of sacrifice associated with the *vidatha* and tries to show that it means the patriarchal house which served as the home of the Vedic sacrifice.[1] Accepting the conclusions of Barth[2] and Keith[3] he assumes that in the Vedic age sacrifice was a strictly private affair, the individual *yajamāna* kindling the sacred fire in his own house and performing the sacrifice. As such he concludes that the public nature of the *vidatha* sacrifice would not be in consistence with the prevalence of the individual type of sacrifice. But Bloomfield's basic assumption is only partly correct. There are reasons to suppose that during the Vedic period there existed public sacrifice alongside the individual sacrifice, and that the former was older than the latter. As shown above, public (in the sense of tribal) sacrifice prevailed among other Indo-European peoples. Therefore it would be only natural to expect it in the Vedic literature, particularly in the *Ṛg Veda*, the earliest monument of the Indo-European letters. The presumption in favour of such a sacrifice is further strengthened by anthropological evidence, which bears testimony to the prevalence of communal (tribal) sacrifice in the earliest stage of social evolution.

As regards internal evidence in the Vedic literature one may cite several passages, indicating the tribal functioning of the people not only in worldly life[4] but also its reflection in religious life. The kernel of the *Ṛg Veda* (namely BK II to BK IX) contains numerous passages, in which prayers are addressed to the gods in chorus by the worshippers. Since sacrifice in the Vedic period is indispensably accompanied by prayer[5], there is no reason why it should not be of collective nature. In respect of sacrifice in general we may refer to two Ṛg Vedic passages, which indicate its tribal nature. According to one passage men kindle the signal of sacrifice and the race of men (*mānuṣo janaḥ*) invites Agni to the solemn rite.[6] Similarly

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1. *JAOS*, xix, 14ff. 2. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 50.
3. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas*, p. 290.
4. This has been ably done by a host of scholars such as K. P. Jayaswal, R.C. Majumdar, N.C. Bandyopadhaya and U.N. Ghoshal in their pioneer works on communal life in ancient India.
5. P S. Deshmukh, *Religion in Vedic Literature*, p. 144.
6. *sajoṣastva divo naro yajñasya ketum indhate yaddhasya mānuṣo janaḥ-sumnāyur juhve adhvare*. *RV*, VI. 2. 3.

another passage states that the dear folk (*priyaḥ janaḥ*) of Indra present oblations to him and are his friends.[1] These passages do not mention any individual sacrificer, and it is obvious that the word *jana* used in them stands for the tribe or the race. At several places in the *Ṛg Veda* the word *yajamāna* is used in plural, which suggests that more than one sacrificer participated in some religious rites. In one passage Sarasvatī is requested to give food and wealth to the "present sacrificers."[2]

With regard to specific Vedic sacrifices it may be pointed out that the domestic *gṛhya* rites are of strictly private nature, but of that there is hardly any trace in the earliest collection of hymns. Most Vedic sacrifices of later times provide for only one *yajamāna*, although some stipulate for more than one priest. Nevertheless, the *sattra* sacrifice, which was not conducted by one *yajamāna* but several and in which the merit of performance belonged collectively to them,[3] may be regarded as a clear and specific case of the prevalence of collective (tribal) sacrifice during the Vedic period. In the opinion of Tilak the *sattras* are "the oldest of the Vedic sacrifices."[4]

Although no description of the *sattra* is given in the early Vedic literature, what we know about it from later sources seems to confirm the opinion of Tilak. First, there are no separate priests but the *yajamānas* themselves act as priests.[5] This betokens an early stage of social development when the division of labour had not given rise to a separate class of priests. Secondly, the generally prevalent view about the sacrificers seems to be that only members of the same *gotra* (clan) could perform this sacrifice.[6] This furnishes a clear example of the tribal sacrifices, which are known to have been practised among primitive tribes. Thirdly, the term *sattra* in its different forms occurs over fifty times in the *Ṛg Veda*, and according to Tilak its meaning is *yajña*. The primitive character

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1. *RV*, VII. 20. 8.
2. *RV*, X. 17. 9.
3. Keith, op. cit., pp. 290. 349. S. A. Dange has brought to bear a new point of view on the analysis of the communal characteristics of the *sattra* in his book *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, pp. 41-43.
4. B. G. Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, p. 193.
5. *Jaimini Pūrvamīmāṃsāiūtra*. X. 6. 45-60.
6. The view of the ancient ritualists, *i.e.* Gāṇagāri, Āśvalāyana and Jaimini, are quoted in Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, ii, 1241.

of the *sattra* affords no ground for doubting its antiquity. Had it been a priestly invention of later times it would have provided some measure either to fill the pockets of the priests at the cost of the lay sacrificers or to increase their social pre-eminence, but of such developments there is no indication in this sacrifice.[1]

Curiously enough the *sattra*, which is noted for its collective (tribal) character and antiquity, escaped the notice of Bloomfield. He, however, suspects that there may be something of either communal or national worship hidden away in the folds of the horse sacrifice.[2] We may add that an examination of some ceremonies of the *vājapeya* and *rājasuya* sacrifices would also bear out his suspicion. Thus in the chariot-race ceremony of the former, and in the cattle-raid and dice-playing ceremonies of the latter, the king (sacrificer) participates as one of the numerous competitors, and in one case there is clear evidence of competitors being described as clansmen.[3] These ceremonies clearly betray elements of communal functioning in these sacrifices. In the context of these traces of communal sacrifice it would be unfair to dismiss Hillebrandt's proofs for the existence of tribal sacrifices in the Vedic period as a "poor substitute for the evidence which should be forthcoming."[4] The latest work on this line has been done by B. N. Datta, who, on the basis of the analysis of the Ṛg Vedic hymns composed by the *ṛṣis* of different clans in honour of different deities, concludes that originally a particular tribe or clan was the votary of a special god.[5] This is a very strong proof of the existence of the tribal or collective sacrifice in the earliest period. Hence Bloomfield's theory regarding the absence of collective sacrifices during the Vedic period is undoubtedly open to question.

Above all, as shown previously, in the large mass of the occurrences of the term *vidatha* it is not the individual who aspires for brave sons and wealth but a number of people assembled together. Lastly, the meaning of patriarchal house

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1. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 3.
2. *JAOS*, xlviii, 200.
3. Infra, Ch. XI.
4. Keith, op. cit., p. 290.
5. B. N. Datta, *Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism*, pp. 110-14.

assigned to this term by Bloomfield runs counter to its interpretations given in the lexicons. The *Nighaṇṭu* explains it as sacrifice and the *Nirukta* as both sacrifice and assembly[1], but none interprets it in the sense of house.

In conclusion it may be stated that there is evidence of both communal and tribal life, religious and worldly, as well as patriarchal family life in the early Vedic period. The institution of the *vidatha*, however, seems to be in tune with the communal type of life. The use of words in the *Ṛg Veda* does not supply much direct proof of strictly monogamous patriarchal family life. The term *kula*, which indicates such a life, is not used at all in the *Ṛg Veda* ; the term *kulapā* in the sense of family head is used only once. On the other hand the words for tribe, namely, *jana* and *viś*, are mentioned there respectively about 275 and 271 times. This can be taken as sufficient proof of the importance of the tribal and communal life during the early Vedic period. And it is probably this aspect of life which manifests itself in its manifold ramifications in the *vidatha*.

Similarly it may not be quite correct to exaggerate the fact that the *vidatha* was a council of the wise or a spiritual authority. There are, of course, some references to this aspect of its nature. We learn that there existed in heaven the synods (*vidathas*) of the wise.[2] It is not known whether the term *vidathya*, like *sabheya*, was used as a title of distinction.[3] But one or two stray references are not adequate to establish the general nature of the *vidatha* as the council of the wise. The balance of the probability is that it was a popular assembly in the beginning, but in course of time came to be confined to few people, and its membership, like that of the Anglo-Saxon national council Witenagemot, came to be regarded as a mark of distinction.

An important point for consideration is whether the rājanyas and brāhmaṇas, who had practically established themselves as the ruling class in the period of the later Saṃhitas and Brāhmaṇas, attended the *vidatha*. References suggest the presence of the priest generally called the *hotṛ*, but priests or brāhmaṇas as a class are not associated with this institution. Although

1. *Nirukta*, IX. 3; *Nighaṇṭu*, III. 17.
2. *RV*, III. 1. 2.
3. *sādanyaṃ vidathyaṃ sabheyaṃ pitṛśravaṇaṃ yo dadāśadasmai. RV*, I.91.20.

the people present in the *vidatha* address Indra and Varuṇa as rājan, there is no reference to the presence of rājans in that assembly. In one passage the term *vidathya* is applied to the *samrāṭ* or the great king, which shows that the king also attended the *vidatha*.[1] In another passage we find the use of the term "king in the assembly" (*vidatheṣu samrāṭ*).[1] But the rājanyas or brāhmaṇas hardly act as members of the *vidatha*, as they do in the case of the *sabhā* and *samiti*. Ludwig has made several convincing citations to prove the high social status of the members of the *sabhā*. On the basis of *RV*, X. 97.6. Ghoshal suggests that the rājās (princes) were the most distinguished members of the *samiti*, which evidently contained also a popular element.[3] But it is difficult to accept the view that *vidatha* primarily means the assembly, especially of the *maghavans* (rich men) and brāhmaṇas.[4] In interpreting *RV*, II. 27. 12 Zimmer takes the *vidatha* to be a smaller assembly than the *samiti*, which may give the impression that it was aristocratic in nature. There is no doubt that the passage in question refers to some rich and munificent people, riding on chariots, attending the *vidatha*, but unless we have more such references it is not possible to characterise this institution as aristocratic. Besides, neither the passage cited above throws any light on the relative numerical strength of the *samiti* and the *vidatha* nor has this been discussed anywhere else in the Vedic literature. Indeed there is more proof of the rise of aristocratic elements in the case of the *sabhā* and *samiti*, particularly in that of the former, than in the case of the *vidatha*. Hence if any hypothesis can be built on negative evidence, one can venture the suggestion that the early *vidatha* was probably the typical institution of the period when the tribe had not broken into classes such as brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas.

In the light of what has been stated above it may be of some interest to examine the problem of the antiquity of the *vidatha* in relation to two other Vedic institutions, the *sabhā* and *samiti*. The primitive character of the *vidatha* is evident from the

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1. *RV*, IV. 21. 2.
2. *RV*, III. 55. 7.
3. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 17.
4. Ludwig quoted in *VI*, ii, 296.

undifferentiated nature of its functions. That nature it shares with both the Vedic assemblies. What makes it more primitive is the distributive functions or common consumption of the produces, which presupposes common production. This, according to the evidence of anthropology, can be found only in the most primitive tribal organisation. Secondly, the participation of woman in its deliberations places it earlier in point of time than the other Vedic institutions. Thirdly, the absence of any clear and definite evidence of class distinctions in the *vidatha* may be taken as another ground for its antiquity. Lastly, we may also consider the bearing of comparative philology on this problem. Just as the word *sabhā* has its parallel in some Indo-European languages, the term *vidatha* has its equivalent word in Gothic an important Indo-European language. Although its parallel does not find place in any of the dictionaries according to the rules of philology, the term *vidatha* can be reduced to the *Gothic* word *vitoth*, which means law.[1] It may be noted that both these words can be derived from the root '*vid*".[2] We may add that in the opinion of Oldenberg the term *vidatha* means ordinance, and according to Roth it means order.[3] It is not surprising that its deliberative functions should invest it with the meaning of law.

Thus a consideration of the nature of the composition and functions of the *vidatha* and the existence of its corresponding equivalent in Gothic tend to establish the hypothesis that the *vidatha* was the earliest collective institution of the Indo-Āryans. Since some of its features, the association of woman and distributive functions, are not found in the early assemblies of the Indo-European peoples, the *vidatha* may have been the common collective organisation of the Indo-Europeans before they branched off into different sub-divisions.

A study of all the available references reveals that the *vidatha* was the earliest folk-assembly of the Indo-Āryans attended both by men and women, performing all kinds of functions, economic, militay, religious and social. It answered the needs of a primitive society which hardly knew division of

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1. August Fick, *Indogermanischen Wörterbuch*, p. 189. I have consulted Dr. S. K. Chatterjee and Dr. T. Chaudhury on this point.
2. Ibid.
3. Quoted in *VI*, ii. 296.

labour or domination of the male over the female, and which probably shared its produces in common. It seems that the keystone of the *vidatha* system was co-operation. People gathered in this assembly fought together, sang together, prayed together, played together and deliberated together without any discrimination of sex. How far the *vidatha* served as an instrument of government is difficult to determine. The internal evidence in itself is too fragmentary to solve this problem, but the nature of primitive institutions as known to anthropology can throw some light on this question. In the opinion of Morgan the council of the gens was "the great feature of ancient society, Asiatic, European, and American from the institution of the gens in savagery to civilization. It was the instrument of government as well as the supreme authority over the gens, the tribe and the confederacy."[1] Whether the same can be said of the *vidatha* needs further investigation.

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1. Lewis H. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 84-5. For different views on the subject see Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India* (1958), p. 141, fn. 1; J. P. Sharma, "The Question of the Vidátha in Vedic India," *JRAS* 1965, Pts. 1 & 2, 43-56; and Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India*, p. 96.

Chapter VII

SABHĀ AND SAMITI

I Sabhā

The term *sabhā* is mentioned eight times in the *Ṛg Veda* and denotes both the people in conclave and the hall which was the venue of their meeting. In the second sense it is also used in later texts. The collections of the *Yajus* speak of sins being committed in the village, the forest or the *sabhā*,[1] which evidently appears here in the sense of some place. We also hear of the *sabhāpāla*[2], who represents the guardian of the assembly hall.

Who constituted the *sabhā* ? The term *sabheya* applied to the *vipra*[3] indicates that when it was convened for administrative purposes, it was a gathering of the elect, namely of the brāhmaṇas and the elders. One late Ṛg Vedic reference[4] speaks of woman as *sabhāvatī*, worthy of going to the *sabhā*, which shows that woman members attended this body.

Since the practice obtained in only very primitive assemblies the association of woman with the *sabhā* indicates its greater antiquity, which is also suggested by the fact that in contrast to the term *samiti* the term *sabhā* has several corresponding words in Indo-European languages. Perhaps Hopkins first pointed out the antiquity of the *sabhā* and compared it with the German *sippe*.[5] It has been now established that the word *sabhā* (cf. Indo-European *s(u)ebho*) is derived from a root closely associated with Old European *sub(b)*, Old High German *sipp(e)a*, Gothic *sibja*, and Mid German *sippe*—all meaning an association of the kin, tribe, family or the clan. It is rightly suggested by Bandyopadhaya that probably the early *sabhās* in India also were of the type.[6] In other words they were tribal assemblies. The popular and primitive character of the *sabhā* is also betrayed by the homely nature of its functions.

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1. *VS*, III. 45, XX. 17.
2. III. 7. 4. 5.
3. *RV*, II, 24. 13.
4. I. 167. 3.
5. "Position of the Ruling Caste etc.,", *JAOS*, xiii. 148.
6. *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, p. 110.

Like a primitive assembly which does not know of any differentiation of functions, members of the *sabhā* debated over the domestication of cattle, played dice and offered prayers and sacrifices.

But subsequently the *sabhā* came to assume a mainly patriarchal and aristocratic character. Woman attended it in the earlier period, but the practice stopped in later Vedic times.[1] In connection with the Draupadī episode reference is made to the immemorial custom according to which women do not attend the *sabhā*. The very term came to mean a body of men shining together, which suggests that those who sat on it were supposed to be men of distinction. Several passages are cited by Ludwig to prove the high social status of members of the *sabhā*. One Ṛg Vedic passage refers to the votaries of Indra, who are rich in horses, chariots and kine, and who receive wealth and go to the *sabhā*,[2] a second refers to the prominence conferred on the member of the *sabhā* (*sabhāsada*) by Yaśas[3], and a third speaks of the assemblages (not in the context of the *sabhā*) of the well-born or *sujātāḥ*[4] around Agni; according to Sāyaṇa these include priests and their clients but the text shows that they are *suvīras*. A few other references have been cited by Bandyopadhaya. For instance, the *Atharva Veda* states that "princes come together" presumably to make the assembly complete.[5] According to a passage of the *Ṛg Veda*[6] worshippers ask for sons skilled in household affairs and prominent in the *sabhā* and sacrifice. The term used is *sabheya*, which means worthy of sitting on the *sabhā*. Another passage from the *Ṛg Veda* speaks of *sabheya viṭras*, which shows that the *sabhā* was attended by priests. So even the early Vedic texts do not have much to support the tribal character of the *sabhā*; on the other hand they reflect the presence of people of high social rank. Men of learning, bearing, and character made their mark here, and were therefore called *sabheya* and *sabhāsaha*. Speeches worthy of the body are referred to in several passages of the *Ṛg Veda*.[7] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* speaks of Soma as

1. *VI*, ii, 427.
2. VIII. 4. 9.
3. X. 71. 10.
4. VII. 1. 4.
5. XIX. 57. 2.
6. I. 91. 20.
7. II. 24. 13.

an overlord holding a court to which under-kings are flocking together. This shows that the royal court was attended by chiefs in later Vedic times. It is suggested that it was attended by the elders or fathers,[1] although this is not supported by any passage from Vedic literature.

The original, tribal character of the *sabhā* was undermined in the age of the *Ṛg Veda*. It may have been a tribal assembly in the period when there were no developed classes, not much distinction between the rich and the poor and no stability in the office of the king. But as economic inequalities and social classes developed and as the king emerged to be the principal factor in the political system of the day, his person came to be associated with rich men of position and the elders, whose counsel commanded weight and authority with the community.[2] Those who possessed cows, horse and chariots constituted the ruling class, standing over dispossessed and impoverished fellow tribesmen who could not sit on the *sabhā*. Evidently power belonged to the horse- and chariot-owning aristocracy, whose members made up the *sabhā*. "These formed his advisory body, and the king came to be dependent on their advice and counsel. The evolution of this body was similar to that of the council of chiefs among the Teutons, to the Senate among the Romans and the Witanagemut among the Anglo-Saxons."[3]

The earliest references do not give prominence to the political character of the *sabhā*. On the other hand a passage from the *Ṛg Veda* speaks of the *sabhā* as a dicing and gambling assembly.[4] If later tradition be accepted as a guide, the *sabhā* was also used for popular amusements such as dancing and music. This is natural because primitive people do not make any distinction between sport, politics and religion. The *sabhā* was also associated with popular practices of witchcraft and magic. For example it is said in one of the passages from the *Atharva Veda*[5] : "What witchcraft they have made for that in the *sabhā*, I take that back again."

The *sabhā* discussed pastoral affairs. Cattle being one of the main sources of the livelihood of the people, it delighted

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1. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity* (1924), p. 18.
2. Bandyopadhya, op. cit., p. 113.
3. Ibid.
4. X. 34. 6.
5. V. 31. 6.

in dwelling on the excellences of the kine.[1] People expressed their anxiety for the fattening of the lean cattle. They showered praises upon the kine and recalled their vigour with gusto in the meeting.[2]

Religious activities were not altogether absent in the *sabhā*. Its members invoked Indra to protect the *sabhā* and the *sabhāsads*. When this body met, a sacrifice was offered on behalf of the assembly, the fire used being called *sabhya*.

The *sabhā* performed political and administrative functions. Several references show that the *sabhā* exercised judicial functions, a fact which has been stressed by several writers. A late passage from the *Ṛg Veda* has been taken to represent *sabhā* as a body which removes the stain attaching to a person by means of accusation.[3] In the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice the *sabhācara* is dedicated as a victim to Dharma. Dharma means justice, and hence according to Macdonell it is not difficult to see in *sabhācara* a member of the law-court, perhaps as one of those who sit to decide cases.[4] Macdonell also takes *sabhāsad* to refer to the assessors who decided legal cases in the assembly. He further remarks : "It is also possible that the *sabhāsads*, perhaps the heads of the families, were expected to be present at the *sabhā* oftener than the ordinary man; the meetings of the assembly for justice may have been more frequent than for general discussion and decision." Macdonell points out that the judicial functions of the *sabhā* were exercised not by the whole assembly but by a standing committee of the same.[5] Further evidence of the *sabhā* acting as a judicial body has been adduced by Jayaswal. The *sabhā* is called the 'trouble' and 'vehemence',[6] implying that it brought trouble to those who violated the law. Sometimes we hear of sharp repartees and offensive speeches, as thieves and criminals were dragged before the *sabhā*, and it seems that the richest and the most influential men had to submit to the decisions of their peers assembled

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1. *RV*. VI. 28. 6.
2. *AV*. IV. 21. 6.
3. *RV*. X. 71. 10.
4. *VI*, ii, 427-28.
5. *VI*, ii, 428.
6. *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*, tr. H. Oldenberg, SBE, xxix, 362.

here.[1] All such allusions clearly point to the judicial functions of the *sabhā*.

The *Maitryāṇi Saṃhitā* mentions *sabhā* in the sense of the court house of the village judge, the *grāmyavādin*, who is referred to in all the collections of the *Yajus*. Furthermore, in ancient mythology Yama, who was regarded as the king and judge of the departed, is described as having a *sabhā* and a number of *sabhāsads*. A passage from the *Atharva Veda* speaks of Yama's *sabhāsads* dividing among themselves 1/16 of hopes fulfilled or pious deeds[2] done on the earth. We have therefore no doubt that the *sabhā* had judicial functions to discharge, although most references to this aspect belong to later Vedic times. In any case Jayaswal's statement that the *sabhā* was a national judicature[3] is not a sound conclusion.

The judicial character of the *sabhā* continued even to later times. The Jātakas preserve an old memorial verse which says that the *sabhā* which has no good people (*santa*) is no *sabhā* and that the people who do not speak out the *dharma* (justice) are not good people, and that those who avoid personal sentiments and speak out the *dharma* are called the good people.[4] Moreover, the term *sabhāsad* in the sense of the assessor continued down to the times of the Dharmasūtras and Smṛtis, which lay down qualifications for their election. "In the legal literature, the *sabhā* is a court or judicial assembly presided over by the king as chief judge, and only the councillors, judges and police officers take part as men of authority over witnesses and accused"[5]

Both the earlier and the later references testify to the royal presence in the *sabhā*. Although some passages hint at the king's election by the *samiti*, we have no such reference to his election by the *sabhā*. But the king definitely attended the *sabhā* in Vedic times. Probably in earlier times he did not regularly preside over the *sabhā*, for the *sabhāpati*, lord of the assembly is separately mentioned in the collections of the *Yajus*. But in later times he presided over its deliberations. Two

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1. *AV*, VII. 12. 3.
2. III. 29. 1.
3. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 18.
4. *Jāt.*, v. 509 quoted and explained in Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p.19 and fn. 8.
5. Hopkins, *JAOS*, xiii, 148.

references in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[1] show that the king maintained his own *sabhā*. A notable piece of evidence is furnished by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[2] which describes Soma as an overlord holding a court, to which under-kings are flocking together. This reminds us of the numerous *rājās* sitting in the Licchavi assembly and claiming equality in rank and position.

The king considered the advice of the *sabhā* to be of supreme importance and could not possibly do without the support of its members, who spoke and hotly discussed proposals. This is clearly conveyed by the tenor and spirit of an *Atharva Veda* passage,[3] which, according to Bandyopadhaya, was presumably uttered by a king.

> "In concord may Prajāpati's two daughters *sabhā* and *samiti* protect me. May, everyman I meet, respect and aid me. Fair be my words, oh, my fathers, at the meetings.
>
> We know thy name, oh, *sabhā*, thy name is interchange of talk; Let all the company who join the *sabhā* agree with me.
>
> Of the men seated here, I make the splendour and lore my own. Indra make me conspicuous in all this gathered company."

If such a prayer was offered by the king it is manifest that he could not ignore the support of the *sabhā*, which was evidently a debating and deliberative body. Prayer was made in the *sabhā* for co-operation and for avoiding discord. It seems that the resolution passed by the *sabhā* was binding on all. The *Atharva Veda* calls this body *nariṣṭā*,[4] which Sāyaṇa explains as the resolution of many that cannot be broken or violated. From this Jayaswal infers that the resolution of the *sabhā* was considered binding on all and inviolable.[5] But the term *nariṣṭā* has been taken to mean interchange of talk by Griffith and sports by Whitney.[6] However, Sāyaṇa's interpretation of the term

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1. V. 3. 6 ; VIII. 14. 1.
2. *tasya rājānaḥ sabhāgāḥ*. III. 3. 3. 14.
3. VII. 12. 1-3 (on the basis of Griffith's tr.).
4. *AV*, VII. 12. 2.
5. *Hindu Polity*, p. 19.
6. *HOS*, vii, 397.

is supported by the character of the assembly of the Homeric age. In Heroic Greece also the decision of the meeting was supreme and final. As Schomann says in his *Antiquities of Greece*, "whenever a matter is discussed that requires the co-operation of the people for its execution, Homer gives no indication of any means by which the people could be forced to it against their will."[1]

The nature of the *sabhā* in the epic traditions is discussed by Hopkins. He states : "In the Epic we find the *sabhā* to be an essembly of any sort. It may be a judicial one, a court of law; it may be a royal one, the king's court; it may be a social gathering for pleasure; and finally it may, in its older meaning, be a political assembly."[2] Although it is difficult to assign this material to any particular period, it suggests the continuity of the later Vedic tradition.

II Samiti

Significantly the *samiti* appears in those portions of the *Ṛg Veda* which are considered to be the latest; all the six references we have come from Books I and X. This would mean that the *samiti* assumed importance only towards the end of the Ṛg Vedic period or even later. But with the *sabhā* the position is different; four references belong to the earlier portions of the *Ṛg Veda* and four to its later portions. So the *samiti* does not seem to be older than the *sabhā*. The two bodies are mentioned together four times in the *Atharva Veda*, and every time *sabhā* appears first and *samiti* next. This again suggests that the *sabhā* is older than the *samiti*. It is generally recognised that the early *samiti* was a folk assembly in which people of the tribe gathered for transacting tribal business. According to Ludwig the *samiti* was a more comprehensive conference including not only all the common people (*viśāḥ*) but also the brāhmaṇas and the rich patrons known as *maghavan*. Possibly it was a general tribal assembly corresponding to the Agora of Homeric times. It met for discharging tribal business, and was presided over by the king, to whose presence in the assembly there are clear references. The phrase "*samiti* of the Pañcālas" suggests

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1. Quoted in Engels, *Origin of Family, Property and State* (Moscow edn.), p. 150.
2. *JAOS*, xiii, 148.

that it was a tribal body. A reference in the *Atharva Veda* shows that women also attended it,[1] but this is not as clear as in regard to the *sabhā*.

In later times the princes or the *rājans* also attended the *samiti*. They were the most distinguished members of this body, which evidently contained also popular elements.[2] Jayaswal thinks that the composition of the *samiti* was based on some principle of representation, and that the town and the village were probably represented by its *grāmaṇī*,[3] but the available evidence does not support it.

The functions of the *samiti* embraced several non-political activities. In the later Vedic period the *samiti* discussed philosophical questions. When Śvetaketu completed his education and claimed complete knowledge of the philosophic literature, he presented himself before the *samiti* of the Pañcālas. Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, the *rājanya* who presided over the assembly of the Pañcāla people, put to him five philosophic questions, none of which the presumptous young man could answer. At this Jaivali remarked "How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been educated ?"[4] Here we find the *samiti* acting as a gathering of scholars to test the knowledge of educated persons.

The *samiti* was concerned with religious ceremonies and prayers. Prayers were made for reaching common agrements there. It had also something to do with the offerings made to the gods. Thus in one of the hymns Agni is invoked in the *samiti* to enjoy the portions offered to him as oblations. It is also desired that the divine *samiti* may take place among the gods also.[5]

It is suggested by Bandyopadhaya[6] that the *samiti* had some military functions also, for commentators take the term to mean war or battle array. Yāska assigns to this word the meaning of battle,[7] which is also associated with it in classical literature.[8] Further, Sāyaṇa translates the word *samiti* by

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1. *AV*, VIII. 10. 5.
2. Ghoshal, *History of Public Life*, i, 17.
3. Op. cit., p. 15.
4. Br. *Ār. Up.*, *VI.* 2 ; *Chā. Up.*, V. 3.
5. *AV*, XVIII, 1. 26.
6. P. 119.
7. *Nirukta*, II. 107.
8. *Amara*, II. 8. 107.

yuddha or *saṃgrāma*.[1] We may add that a reference in the *Atharva Veda* suggests that the *samiti* was identical with the tribal military unit *grāma* whose collection was called *saṃgrāma*.[2] The *samiti's* association with fighting is supported by a comparative study of early Indo-European institutions. In the early Greek, Roman and German assemblies fighting and voting went side by side. The freemen of the Homeric age assembled in military array and decided important questions.[3] Tacitus states that the armed freemen of the German tribe assembled under their chief in a gathering and took decisions on peace and war. "If his sentiments displease them, they reject them with murmurs; if they are satisfied they brandish their spears. The most complimentary form of assent is to express approbation with their weapons."[4] The Roman assembly (comitia centuriata) definitely served as a military body. All this would imply the use of the *samiti* for military purposes.

But the politial functions of the samiti are far more prominent. References suggest that the king was elected and re-elected by the *samiti*. Zimmer pointed out long ago that the election of the king in case of elective monarchies was carried only by the *viś* who assembled in the *samiti*. He thinks a passage in the *Ṛg Veda* (X. 166. 4) probably refers to an influential candidate for the throne, wishing to carry through his will in the teeth of the *samiti*. Zimmer infers the elective function of the *samiti* from a passage of the *Atharva Veda*[5] and is supported by Jayaswal. But the passage in question refers to the choosing of the king by his tribesmen (*viśaḥ*). How-

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1. Comm. on *RV*, X. 97, 6 (what is physician among herbs, so is king in the *samiti*).

2. The expression *ye saṃgrāmā samitayaḥ* (*AV*, XII. 1.56) has been taken to mean by Jayaswal the villages which assembled together in the *samitis* (*Hindu Polity*, p. 15), but his citation (ibid.) that Śaryāta Mānava wandered about with his *grāma* (*ŚB.*, IV. 1. 5. 2. 7) clearly shows that in the beginning the *grāma* was not a settled unit but a tribal band led by its chief.

3. Sidgwick, pp. 34-36 quoted in Bandyopadhaya, op. cit., p. 119

4. *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, (tr., A. J. Church & W. J. Brodrib), Germany and its Tribes, Fragment 11 (p. 714.).

5. III. 4. 2.

ever, as Ghoshal thinks, there is nothing improbable in the election of the king in special cases by the *samiti*.

That it was the duty of the king to attend the meeting of the *samiti* is demonstrated by the use of the simile "like a true king going to the *samiti*." Several passages speak of kings having been present at meetings of the *samiti* and guiding its deliberations;[1] the kings of the Pañcālas or Videhas are prominent examples. The *samiti* was considered to be a great asset to the king. A king prays for the destruction of his rivals and claims he has mastered their thought (*citta*), their way of life (*vrata*), their *samiti*.[2] It was such an integral part of the early Vedic polity that a king without a *samiti* was not even to be thought of. What a forest was to the buffalo, what a pitcher was to the Soma juice, what a sacrificer was to the priest, so was the *samiti* to the king.[3] It was the main prop, without which the royal power could not be conceived to have subsisted. After coronation the priest utters a formula, in order that the king may be established on his throne and the *samiti* be loyal to him.[4] In a hymn the brāhmaṇa priest utters a curse on those kṣatriya rulers who destroy the cattle of brāhmaṇas. In that context he alludes to the catastrophe befalling the *rāṣṭra* or the kingdom of tyrannical kṣatriya rulers. It is said that the rain of Mitra-Varuṇa does not fail on him who wrongs the priest. The *samiti* (the popular gathering and hence loyalty) does not submit to him, and he wins no friend to do his will.[5]

Perhaps the tribesmen (*viś*) who met in the assembly exercised control over the public land. A reference in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[6] clearly points to the right of control possessed by the popular assembly. The passage says "To whomsoever the kṣatriya with the approval of the *viś* grants a settlement, that is properly given." According to Ghoshal it seems to mean that the king's gift of folk or public land with the consent of the people was in accordance with the tribal or customary

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1. *RV*, IX. 92. 6 ; *Chā. Up.*, V. 3.
2. *RV*, X. 166. 4.
3. *RV*, IX. 92. 6. Incidentally it shows that in the age of the *Ṛg Veda* buffaloes had not been domesticated by the new-comers.
4. *AV*, VI. 88. 3.
5. Ibid., V. 19. 15.
6. VII. 1. 1. 4.

law. Although this reference does not speak of the *samiti*, the tribesmen may have discussed the distribution of land when they met together in that body. "The Homeric evidence shows clearly that while power or privilege was in the gift of the king, land was in the gift of the people, who bestowed on their leaders, in reward for military service, estates which differed from others in that they were not assigned by lot to tribe or clan, but by special gift to an individual."[1]

Both the *Ṛg Veda* and *Atharva Veda* stress the need for concord in the *samiti*. In a prayer for agreement in the assembly the poet says that the *mantra* be common, the *samiti* be common, *manas* be common and their thoughts (*citta*) be united. They strove to reach common agreement in the *samiti*.[2] Desire is expressed for the same *mantras*, the same *samiti* and the same *vrata*.[3] The insistance on unanimity is in accord with the practice obtaining in primitive communities. Thus "among the Iroquois the final decisions had to be unanimous, as was also the case with many of the decisions of the German mark communities."[4] This unanimity was however reached in the *samiti* after a good deal of debate. All the prayers and ceremonies, charms and counter-charms were directed to one end alone—to get the better of one's rival in debate, to induce the members present to accept his view of the case, to make his speech pleasant to members and to bend the minds of those who are of different views.[5]

The *samiti* was a great deliberative body. It carried on active discussions with a view to achieving concord. "May deliberations be one-pointed; discussions to the same intent; and resolutions to the same effect. Oh Rājā Soma, sow the seeds of agreement among them,"[6] so says a prayer. The speaker wanted to prove himself "brilliant, not to be contradicted" in the *samiti*. Apparently the king-president was expected to conduct the deliberations in such a manner so as to bring about a consensus of opinion. There are charms and spells to secure concord and harmony.[7]

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1. Quoted in Thomson, *Aeschylus & Athens*, p. 40.
2. *RV*, X. 191. 3.
3. *AV*, VI. 64. 2. (Whitney's tr, p. 329).
4. Engels, *Origin of Family, Property and State*, p. 132.
5. R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 125-26.
6. *AV*, VI. 88. 3.
7. Ibid., III. 30.

That the *samiti* enjoyed immense powers is made clear by the references. But it would be stretching the evidence to say that the *samiti* was a sovereign body from the constitutional point of view, as is stated by Jayaswal.[1] It may have wielded supreme powers in the earlier stage, but it did not retain them till the end of the Vedic period. The *samiti* cannot be taken as the exact counterpart of the sovereign popular assembly described by Tacitus in the ancient German constitution.

III Relation between the Sabhā and the Samiti

The distinction between the *sabhā* and the *samiti* cannot be made out with precision. In the beginning probably there was no difference between the structure and the functions of the two bodies, a fact which seems to be true of the relation between the Homeric assembly and the council. In the opinion of Vedic people both originated from the same source, being daughters of Prajāpati. A passage from the *Atharva Veda* shows that both were mobile units, led by chiefs who kept moving along with their force.[2] According to Chadwick there is some evidence "to indicate that council and assembly were not very clearly distinguished."[3] Probably the only difference was that the *sabhā* performed judicial functions which the *samiti* did not. Later the *sabhā* tended to be an aristocratic body, and it became a court of the king while the *samiti* passed out of existence. Jayaswal thinks that in later times the *pariṣad* took the place of the *samiti*. But this can be said of the *sabhā* as well. Again, in contrast with the *sabhā* the *samiti* was associated with fighting wars. But both the bodies were not without some religious functions although these are not prominent. According to Chadwick tribal assemblies in Sweden appear to have been primarily religious gatherings for the great annual sacrifices at the chief national sanctuary. It is more than probable however that such was the case also with the assemblies of the ancient Germans.[4] This can be said to some extent of both the *sabhā* and the *samiti*.

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1. *Hindu Polity*, pp. 12-13.
2. *AV*, XV. 9.
3. *The Heroic Age*, 384.
4. Ibid., p. 369.

Opinions differ regarding the nature of the *sabhā* and the *samiti*. According to Hillebrandt there can be no distinction between the *sabhā* and the *samiti* ; both indicate the same thing. But the *sabhā* and the *samiti* are clearly mentioned at least 4 times in the *Atharva Veda* as the two daughters of Prajāpati. According to Bloomfield[1] the *sabhā* was the place of assembly which also served as a centre for social gathering. He also thinks that the *sabhā* generally means a public assembly. But it could not be merely a place because it had to perform judicial functions as well. Zimmer looks upon the *sabhā* as the village assembly. On this basis R. C. Majumdar takes it to be a local assembly in contrast with the *samiti* which he regards as the central assembly. But the king attended the *sabhā*, and it would be too much to expect him to attend the meeting of every village *sabhā*. Further, in several collections of the *Yajus* the *sabhā* is mentioned along with the village and *araṇya*.[2] If that be so it can be as well equated with *araṇya* and can be described as an assembly of the forest.

The commonly accepted view about the mutual relation of these two Vedic institutions is one initiated by Ludwig. According to him the *samiti* was the assembly of the whole people, and the *sabhā* was an analogue of the Homeric council of elders. It was a select body to which great men of the tribe (*maghavan*) alone would go to take counsel with the king. Jayaswal practically concurs with this opinion. He states that the *sabhā* was also a popular body but it was "the standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the *samiti*." N. C. Bandyopadhaya also thinks more or less on the same lines, but Ghoshal holds that like the *samiti* the *sabhā* was also a folk assembly. The main difficulty in ascribing popular character to these two bodies is that this cannot be done over such a long period of time as covering the whole Vedic age. Evidently the *sabhā* was a tribal, popular body in the beginning and an aristocratic body later, but the *samiti* retained its popular character even in later Vedic times.

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1. *JAOS*, xix, 13, 18.
2. *VI*, II, 426, fn. 4.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VEDIC GAṆA AND THE ORIGIN OF THE POST-VEDIC REPUBLICS

K. P. Jayaswal, who did pioneer work in bringing the ancient Indian republics to prominent notice in the framework of Indian history writing, observed the following about their origin : "The hymns of the *Ṛik* and *Atharvan*, the view of the *Mahābhārata* and the tradition which Megasthenes heard in India in the 4th century B.C. , all point to the fact that republican form of government in India came *long after monarchy*, and *after the early Vedic* age.[1]" This view may be true of the class-divided post-Vedic republics, but so far as the tribal republics of Vedic times are concerned, such a generalisation does not seem to accord with the evidence of either early or later literature.

Gaṇa, the technical word for the republic, is found at forty-six places in the *Ṛg Veda*, at nine places in the *Atharva Veda*, and at several places in the Brāhmaṇas. In most cases it has been interpreted in the sense of "assembly" or "troops". For a few years after 1910 there raged a controversy as to the meaning of this term. In explaining the word *Mālava gaṇa* Fleet translated it as tribe. Jayaswal translated it as an assembly or government by assembly and was supported by F. W. Thomas. But if taken in the chronological order, both the interpretations may be correct. It may be noted that in Vedic texts the Maruts are repeatedly described as a *gaṇa*[2]. Since they were the sons of Rudra, their *gaṇa* in this sense was a tribal unit. Later this meaning tended to be obsolete. In the *Mālava gaṇa* the term Mālava did not indicate all the people of the Mālava state, and the same was the case with the Kṣudrakas[3]. Patañjali states that the slaves and serfs of the Mālavas and the Kṣudrakas should not be known as *Mālavya* and *Kṣaudrakya*, but these terms should be applied to only the

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1. *Hindu Polity*, p. 23; our italics.
2. *RV*, I. 64, 12; V. 52. 13-4; 53. 10; 56. 1; 58. 1-2; VI. 16. 24; X. 36. 7; 77. 1; III. 32. 2; VII. 58 1; IX. 96, 17; *AV*, XIII. 4. 8; IV. 13. 4; *ŚB*, V. 4. 3. 17.
3. *Kāśikā* on *Pāṇini*, V. 3. 114.

children of tribesmen, presumably with full rights.[1] This is a clear indication that the Mālava and Kṣudraka republics were based on slavery and serfdom. Altogether the two references imply that the slaves and serfs of these republics corresponded to the vaiśyas and śūdras. It is further known that slaves and hired agricultural labourers in the republican states of the Mallas and Koliyas were excluded from the exercise of political power, which was monopolised by the nobles. Such a sharp class distinction between fellow tribesmen is not to be found in the tribal *gaṇa* of the Vedic age

A study of the references to the *gaṇa* in early and later Vedic literature would show that it was a sort of gentile organization, chiefly of the Indo-Āryans. It is incorrect to state that the Latin *gens*, which was a group of families descended in the male line from a common ancestor, and the Greek *genos*, are the Indo-European equivalents for the Sanskrit *gaṇa*[2]. The term *gaṇa* cannot be derived from the root *jan* which means to beget. It comes from the root *gaṇ* which means to count. Although literally the term *gaṇa* does not mean a tribe but an artificial collection of people not necessarily belonging to the same tribe, it appears that in most cases in the Vedic literature this term is used in the sense of a tribal organization.

The tribal character of the Vedic *gaṇa* is evident from what we know about the Maruts. They are described as sons of Rudra numbering either forty-nine[3] or sixty-three divided into seven groups, each consisting of nine[4]. There are several references to the *gaṇas* of the Devas in Vedic literature[5]. In Purāṇic and epic literature, which records our earliest traditional history, there are copious allusions to the *gaṇas* of gods and demons. It is needless to add that they were nothing but the reflections of the *gaṇa* organization existing in human society. In every case members of the *gaṇa* are represented as having the same ancestor. It is noteworthy that several of the *gaṇas* mentioned in these traditions bear metronymics. For instance,

1. *idaṃ tarhi kṣaudrakāṇāmapatyaṃ mālavānāmapatyaṃ ityatrābi prāpnoti kṣaudrakyo mālavya iti. naitat teṣāṃ dāse vā bhavati karmakare vā.* Patañjali on *Pāṇini*, IV. 1. 168.
2. S. A. Dange, *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, p. 61.
3. *ekonapañcāśanmaruto vibhaktā api gaṇarūpeṇaiva vartante. Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa*, XIX. 14. 2.
4. *ŚB*, II. 5. 1. 12; *RV*, VIII. 96. 9; *TB*, I. 6. 2. 3.
5. *gaṇodevānāṃ ṛbhavaḥ suhastāḥ. RV*, IV. 35. 3; *TB*, II. 8. 6. 4; *ŚB*, XIII. 2. 8. 4.

there existed the *gaṇa* of the Ādityas descended from Aditi[1]. Further, references in the *Mahābhārata* relating to the exploits of Skanda or Kārtikeya inform us that he went to fight against the Daityas accompanied by seven *gaṇas* of mothers[2]. At another place, in a section on the eulogy of his mothers, we come across the names of over a hundred mothers who form a number of *gaṇas*[3]. The mythical references to their role in the destruction of the *gaṇas* of enemies indicate their fighting character[4]. It would not be correct to take mothers in the literal sense of the term. Obviously they stand for adult women who could take part in the battle. The idea that only men can fight is so deeply imbedded in our minds that only with great effort can we conceive of military assemblies of women, who accompanied Skanda in his march against the Daityas. The earliest division of labour known to prehistory is on the basis of sex, in which cattle breeding, hunting and fighting fell to the share of man, and cooking and agriculture to the lot of woman. But this myth perhaps refers to a still more primitive form of society, when *gaṇas* of women fought in the battlefield along with those of men. Although it does not record a historical fact, such a myth could not have been possibly conceived without some basis in the life of early times. Skanda, with whom the female *gaṇas* are associated, may have been a later god, but the story of the fight between Devas and Asuras is as old as the Vedic period. Moreover, although not forming a part of the main narrative, these references seem to have recorded the old traditions, and are not included in the didactic sections of the epic. All this may lead us to suppose that the female element was also associated with the Vedic *gaṇa*, although there is no direct proof of this in the Vedic literature. There are seven references in early Vedic texts to the association of woman with the *vidatha*,[5] but none in the case of the *gaṇa*.

There is no doubt that the tribal *gaṇa* acted also as an assembly. Griffith has translated this term at several places in

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1. *Ādi Parva*, 60. 36-39.
2. *saptamātṛgaṇāścaiva samājagmurviśāmpate...Śalya Parva* (Kumbakonam edn.), 45. 29; 47. 33-34.
3. *śṛṇu mātṛgaṇān rājankumārānucaranimān, kīrtyamānān mayā vīra sapatnagaṇasūdanān. yaśaśvinīnāṃ mātṛīnāṃ śṛṇu nāmāni bhārata, yābhirvyaptisirajo lokā kalyāṇibhiścabhāgaśaḥ*. Ibid., 47. 1-2 ff.
4. Ibid.
5. Supra, pp. 79-80.

the *Ṛg Veda* as an assembly of gods or men. The Vedic references hardly give any indication of the deliberative aspect of the *gaṇa* which can be inferred from a Purāṇic reference. On one occasion the sages assembled on the Meru mountains passed a resolution (*samaya*), as a result of which all the sages with their *gaṇa* assembled for the transaction of some business[1]. This might suggest that the resolution had been adopted earlier by a *gaṇa* of sages, although the term *gaṇa* is not mentioned in that connection.

In Roman assemblies fighting and voting went together. That may have been the case with the *gaṇa* to the military character of which there are numerous references. The *Ṛg* and *Atharvan* collections repeatedly mention the strong and vigorous *gaṇas* of Maruts in the sense of the army and troops[2], at times under the command of the Sun or Indra[3]. Heroes are described as marching in *gaṇas* or companies[4]. The troops of Maruts are called to the rescue of man[5]. The *gaṇas* seem to have been well equipped with swift steeds and well provided with weapons[6]. It seems that their equipment consisted of bows, arrows and quivers[7]. In the light of what is known about the relations between primitive tribes it may be presumed that these tribal republics were always hostile to one another and in a perpetual state of warfare. We learn, for example, that Bṛhaspati destroyed the obstructive Vala with the loud-shouting *gaṇa* and drove away the cattle. At another place Pūṣan is invoked to lead the *gaṇa* of men that longs for kine to win the spoil[8]. On the analogy of the gentile organization of their primitive and early peoples, it can be said that the *gaṇa* was a self-acting armed organization, every member of which bore arms. Since neither the *Ṛg Veda* nor the *Atharva Veda*

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1. *Vāyu P.* (ASS), 61. 12-14. Unless specified otherwise, the BI edn. of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* has been used in this book.

2. *yuvā sa māruto gaṇastveṣaratho anedyaḥ, śubhaṃ yāvāpratiṣkutaḥ. RV,* V. 61. 13.

3. *AV,* XIII. 4. 8, *yām ābhajo marutaindrasomeyetivām avardhannabhavan gaṇaste...RV,* III. 35. 9.

4. *rodasi ā vadatā gaṇaśriyo nṛṣācaḥ śurāḥ savasāhimanyavaḥ, ā bandhureṣvama tirna darśatā vidyunna tasthau maruto ratheṣu vaḥ. RV, I.* 64. 9.

5. *trāyantāmimaṃ devāstrāyantāṃ marutāṃ gaṇāḥ. AV,* IV. 13. 4.

6. *ubhā sa varā pratyeti bhāti ca yadīm gaṇam bhajate suprayāvabhiḥ. RV,* V. 44. 12 ; VI. 52. 14.

7. *RV,* X. 103. 3 ; *AV,* XIX. 13. 4.

8. *imaṃ ca no gaveṣaṇaṃ sātaye siṣadho gaṇam. RV,* VI. 56. 5.

restricts war to a nobility or its retainers[1], it is natural to suppose that every member of the popular assembly such as the *sabhā*, *samiti*, *vidatha* and *gaṇa* could take up arms. The remnant of such an organization is found later in the ten *āyudhajīvī saṅghas* of Pāṇini and four *vārtāśastropajīvī saṅghas* of Kauṭilya. The latter term probably indicated that these republics had not evolved permanent class divisions, in which only the ruling class possessed the power of arms as against the disarmed mass of the ruled class. Hence it would appear that the Vedic *gaṇa* was an armed organization of the whole people.

The leader of the *gaṇa*, at one place known as *gaṇasya rājā*, is generally called *gaṇapati*. Indra[2], Marut[3], Bṛhaspati[4] and Brahmaṇaspati[5] particularly the last three, are repeatedly described as *gaṇapati*. There is at least one reference in the *Ṛg Veda*, in which the leader of the *gaṇa* is given the title of *rājan*; in connection with the *soma* sacrifice the king is invoked as *gaṇānāmpati*[6]. Brahmaṇaspati, who at several places is called *gaṇapati*, is also described as the supreme king of prayers[7]. The appellation of *rājan* to *gaṇapati* may suggest that gradually the latter transformed himself into the position of a king. Whether the *gaṇapati* was selected by members of the *gaṇa* is nowhere indicated in the references. The *vidatha* elected its priest, but there is no such reference in the case of the *gaṇa*[8]. The tribal analogy and the practices of the Greek tribes strengthen the hypothesis that the *gaṇapati* was elected. At least there is no reference to the hereditary nature of his office. Clearly his most important function was to lead his band for the capture of cattle, which formed the chief spoils of war. It is stated that the *gaṇas* were always anxious to win wealth for themselves.[9]

The spoils captured by the soldiers were not appropriated by them in their individual capacity. It was the

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1. *VI*, ii, 251.
2. *RV*, X. 113. 9.
3. *TB*, III. 11. 4 2.
4. *gaṇānāṃ tvā gaṇapatiṃ havāmahe...jyeṣṭharājaṃ brahmaṇāṃ brahmaṇaspata ā naḥ. RV*, II. 23. 1.
5. *AB*, I. 21.
6. *AB*, IX. 6.
7. *RV*, II. 23. 1.
8. Supra, p. 69.
9. *yacciddhi te gaṇā ime chadayanti madhattaye, pari cidvaṣṭayo dadhurdadato rādho ahrayaṃ sujāte aśvasūnṛte. RV*, V. 79. 5.

duty of the members of the *gaṇa* to surrender all such wealth. A person speaks to the great captain of the mighty army who was the *gaṇa's* royal leader in these words: "To him I show my ten extended fingers. I speak the truth. No wealth am I withholding."[1] It seems that the *gaṇapati* distributed equal shares among them. This is suggested by the following passage of the *Atharva Veda* included according to Sāyaṇa in the *gaṇa-karmāṇi* (duties of the *gaṇa*). "Having superiors (*jyāsvant*), intentful, be ye not divided, accomplishing together, moving on with joint labour (*sadhura*); come hither speaking what is agreeable to one another. I make you united (*sadhrīcīna*), like-minded. Your drinking (*prapā*) be the same, in common your share of food; in the same harness (*yoktra*) do I join (*yuj*) you together ; worship ye Agni united, like spokes about a nave"[2]. If this is taken as evidence of what happened in a *gaṇa*, it implies a sort of primitive communism as found in other tribal societies, in which the tribesmen laboured together and shared their produce in common. We do not know whether the *gaṇapati* received any special share in booty, although special share called 'geras' was given to the leader of early Greek tribes[3]. It is likely that by means of special shares the *gaṇapati* went on accumulating spoils of war till there was a qualitative change in the character of his office, making him into a hereditary *rājan*, ruling with the help of priests and nobles.

In the republics of the time of the Buddha there appears a well organized machinery consisting of *rājan*, *uparājan*, *senāpati*, *bhāṇḍāgārika*, etc. But the Vedic *gaṇa* does not know of any public officer except the *gaṇapati*. Whether this functionary received any other form of remuneration in addition to his share in the spoils of war is not clear. There is no mention of any form of compulsory taxes paid by the members of the *gaṇa* to its leader. The Marut-gaṇa is invoked to accept voluntary offerings made by the worshippers[4]. In the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, in the section on *baliharaṇam*, there is a ritual regarding offerings.

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1. *yo vaḥ senānīrmahato gaṇasya rājā vrātasya prathamo babhūva, tasmai kṛṇomi na dhanā ruṇadhmi daśāhaṃ prācīstadṛtaṃ vadāmi. RV*, X. 34. 12.
2. *AV*, III. 30. 5-6 (Whitney's Translation). Bloomfield gives a slightly different translation. S. A. Dange draws attention to this passage (op. cit., p. 140).
3. George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, pp. 329-33.
4. *accha ṛṣe mārutaṃ gaṇaṃ dānā mitraṃ na yoṣaṇā. RV*, V. 52. 14.

With the recitation of the formula *gaṇebhyaḥ svāhā* and *gaṇapatibhyaḥ svāhā* voluntary religious offerings are made to the *gaṇa* and its leader.[1] Similarly the Vedic phrase *gaṇānāṃ gaṇapatiṃ havāmahe* is proof of religious offerings made to the *gaṇapati*. Proceeding on the assumption that these rituals are contemporary social practices put in religious garb, it would appear that the *gaṇapati* in human society received voluntary taxes out of love and affection for his leadership in war, a fact which is also supported by the prevalence of a similar practice among primitive tribes. What is offered voluntarily to the *gaṇa* and its leader in the early period perhaps assumes compulsory character when the tribal *gaṇa* is transformed into a monarchy. In the *Ṛg Veda* the king is described as *balihṛt*, but no such epithet is applied to the *gaṇapati*.

The post-Vedic *gaṇas* are described as settled on a fixed territory, but the *Ṛg* Vedic *gaṇas* seem to be in a nomadic and migratory state, engaged in perpetual warfare for the possession of cattle. Perhaps the economic basis of the Ṛg Vedic *gaṇas* was the rearing of cattle, which constituted their chief form of wealth. It would thus appear that these *gaṇas* were not rooted in the soil of any particular territory but moved from place to place with their herds of cattle. There is no mention of the capture of agricultural produce or of land, which alone could ensure a stable economy. Later, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the Maruts are described as peasants. Again, in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* Marut is described as grain, which is named *Māruta* after him.[2] Thus it seems that in the period represented by the Brāhmaṇas members of the *gaṇas* practised the art of cultivation.

References indicate that the *gaṇa* also served as a sort of religious assembly. At one place Agni is invoked not to fail its members, who pray and worship. He is further asked to bring all the gods so that they might give riches to the members of the *gaṇa*.[3]

There is also mention of drinking and singing in the *gaṇa*. The *gaṇa* of the Maruts is referred to as drinking heavily.[4]

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1. II. 8. 9.
2. *māruta eṣa bhavati. annaṃ vai marutaḥ. TB*, 1. 7. 7. 3.
3. *agne yāhi dūtyaṃ mā riṣaṇyo devāṃ acchā brahmakṛtā gaṇena...devān ratnadheyāya viśvān. RV*, VII. 9. 5.
4. *ādityān mārutaṃ gaṇaṃ. pra vo bhriyanta indavo matsarā mādayiṣṇavaḥ drapsā madhvaścamūṣadaḥ. RV*, I. 14. 3-4.

Indra is invited to drink *soma* in the assembly of gods.[1] Bṛhaspati is referred to as singing or providing songs for the *gaṇa*.[2] There are several references to the singing of Maruts. In one reference their *gaṇas* are asked to sing to Parjanya[3]. In another they are described as singing and drinking the *soma* juice in a rejoicing mood.[4] It is also stated that Soma enters the hearts of all the company who sing[5]. Again, worshippers are asked to begin the song seated in the *gaṇa*, and Indra is invoked to give strength for sacrifice to one who sings.[6] It is probably from the singing function of the *gaṇa* that the word *gaṇaka*, meaning one who is an expert in the knowledge of sound (*svaramaṇḍala*, etc.), is derived.[7] The term *gaṇikā* may have been derived from the word *gaṇaka*. The epic evidence for the existence of matriarchal *gaṇas* may suggest that in early times women also figured in the *gaṇa*, and hence came to be known as *gaṇikās* in latter times. But dancing women are not known to the early *gaṇa*, although it is associated with the *gaṇarājya* of the Licchavis during the sixth century B. C.[8].

One distinguishing feature of the Vedic *gaṇa* is the absence of class distinctions. Maruts, the typical example of the *gaṇa* society, are described as the *viśaḥ* or people[9]. They are repeatedly described as peasants, whose *gaṇas* consist of troops of seven each[10]. Even the earliest reference shows that they are sixty-three in number, divided into nine *gaṇas* of seven each[11]. This grouping gives no indication of class divisions based on labour. The Purāṇic traditions refer to the *gaṇas* of kṣatriyas. We are told that the Dhārṣṭaka Kṣattra comprised a *gaṇa* of three thousand kṣatriyas,[12] and that Nābhāga owed his power to the backing

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1. *RV*, VI. 41. 1.
2. *sa suṣṭubhā sa ṛkvatā gaṇena valaṃ ruroja phaligaṃ raveṇa. RV*, IV. 50.5.
3. *gaṇāstvopa gāyantu mārutāḥ parjanyaghoṣiṇaḥ pṛthak. AV*, IV. 15. 4.
4. *agne marudbhiḥ śubhayadbhirṛkvabhiḥ somaṃ piba mandasāno gaṇaśribhiḥ. RV*, V. 60. 8.
5. *RV*, IX. 32. 3.
6. *RV*, VI. 41. 1.
7. *vīṇāvādakaṃ gaṇakaṃ gītāya. TB*, III. 4. 15.
8. Āmrapālī, the famous dancer in the Licchavi state, was courted by the rājās, and was so important as to serve as host to the Buddha.
9. *ŚB*, II. 5. 1. 12.
10. Ibid., V. 4. 3. 17.
11. *RV*, VIII. 96. 8 with the commentary of Sāyaṇa.
12. *Vāyu P.* (ASS), 88. 4-5.

of a thousand kṣatriyas.[1] Moreover, the kṣatriya clan of Haihayas consisted of five *gaṇas*.[2] All this might suggest that the *gaṇa* type of organization was peculiar to the kṣatriyas, but probably some Vedic clans were called kṣatriyas in later traditions because of their warlike character. At any rate it is clear that in Vedic times the same *gaṇa* did not consist of kṣatriyas and other elements. Therefore, in all probability, the Vedic *gaṇa* was not characterized by any *varṇa* distinction. If credence is given to the Purāṇic tradition, the times of the Vedic *gaṇa* may be taken as corresponding to the Kṛta age when the varṇa system did not exist. The *Śānti Parva* states that the members of the *gaṇas* are equal in terms of birth and family, but not in terms of bravery, wisdom and money.[3] In the tribal stage of society there could have been little inequality, particularly in respect of wealth, and hence equality by birth may have been the most significant factor in the early *gaṇa*. Later authorities define the *gaṇa* as a collection of families, of which there does not seem to be any indication in the case of the early Vedic *gaṇa*. Although in later Vedic sources the Maruts are divided into seven groups, perhaps the early Vedic *gaṇa* was a wider unit. It has been shown earlier that the word for family (*kula*) is mentioned only once in the *Ṛg Veda*.

Whether the *gaṇa* was a pre-Āryan institution is open to question. In the early traditions it is associated with the Devas as well as the Asuras. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* describes and names the *gaṇas* of Devas.[4] The *Ādi Parva* enumerates six *gaṇas* of gods, namely, those of Rudras, Sādhyas, Maruts, Vasus, Ādityas and Guhyakas, prayers to whom emancipate mankind from all sins[5]. The Vedic association of the *gaṇa* with well-known Āryan gods such as Bṛhaspati, Indra (who is mentioned in a fourteenth cen. B. C. Mitanni inscription[6]), and especially

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1. Ibid., 86. 3.
2. Ibid., 94. 51-2.
3. *jātyā ca sadṛśāḥ sarve kulena sadṛśāstathā na tu śauryeṇa buddhyā vā rūpadravyeṇa vā punaḥ. bhedāccaiva pramādācca nāmyante ripubhirgaṇaḥ...ŚP*, 108. 30-31. It is difficult to accept the translation of Beng. edn. quoted by Jayaswal. The words *tu* and *punaḥ* connect these two verses and do not separate them as has been done by K. M. Ganguly.
4. ii, 3. 2-3.
5. *trayastriṃśata ityete devāsteṣāmahaṃ tava, anvayeṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi pakṣaiśca kulato gaṇān. Ādi P.*, 60. 36 ff.
6. H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 201.

Marut who is also mentioned as Maruttash[1] in a Kassite inscription of the eighteenth century B. C., indicates that this form of tribal organization obtained among the Āryans. On the other hand many epic and Purāṇic references to this institution are associated with Śiva who is called *gaṇādhyakṣa*[2], with his son Skanda, with Bhūtas,[3] and above all with women. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* mentions the *gaṇas* of Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Vidyādharas, who are described as the progeny of Kaśyapa.[4] We learn about the Saiṃhikeya *gaṇa* of Daityas who were ten thousand strong[5], and the numerous *gaṇas* of Mlecchas who inhabited the various parts of Jambūdvīpa such as Aṅga, Śaṅkha and Varāha dvīpas.[6] All this may suggest that the *gaṇa* form of organization also prevailed among the non-Āryans. Absence of a parallel word in Indo-European languages may lend force to the hypothesis that it was typically an Indian institution unaffected by Āryan influences. In sharp contrast to the *vidatha*, which became obsolete both as an organization and as a word in the post-Vedic period, the *gaṇa* continued into post-Vedic times.

The one tendency that vitiates the study of ancient Indian institutions such as the *sabhā*, *samiti*, etc. is the attempt to concentrate on their purely political aspect as an independent and isolated phenomenon. Since primitive institutions hardly admit of any attempt at differentiation of functions, social and political, there can be no correct appraisal of their nature unless we examine their various aspects in inter-relation with one another. Judged in this light, the Vedic *gaṇa* was probably in the nature of a primitive tribal democracy centring in itself the military, distributive, religious and social activities of early man. Although there is no direct evidence of the election of the *gaṇapati*, it seems that there were no public officials, no taxes, no classes and no army apart from the *gaṇa* army. In other words, the Vedic *gaṇa* was primarily a tribal republic. By the end of

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1. Ibid., p. 202, fn. 1.
2. *Mbh.* (Kumbakonam edn.), X. 7. 8.
3. *Bhāgavata P.*, II. 6. 13; XII. 10. 14. The Purāṇic statement that Sagara destroyed the five *gaṇas* of Yavanas, Pāradas, Kāmbojas, Pahlavas and Śakas refers to a much later tradition.
4. *Vāyu P.*, ii. 8. 11 ff.
5. Ibid., 7. 17-21.
6. Ibid., no. 477, App. quoted in Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, p. 174.

the Ṛg Vedic period we come across tribal republics of other varieties. A passage.[1] which refers to kings sitting together in an assembly, has been rightly interpreted to imply that some tribes had no hereditary chief, but were governed directly by the tribal council. As in some oligarchic clans, the title of the *rājā* was taken by all the great men of the tribe, who governed it through a folk-moot.[2] Accordingly Jayaswal's view that the republic came *after the early Vedic age* and *after monarchy*[3] can be true of the post-Vedic territorial and class-divided republics but not of the early tribal republics. It seems that as the office of the *gaṇapati* became transformed into that of the *rājan*, the tribal republic passed into the monarchical state, a fact supported by anthropological evidence[4].

The first and nearest attempt at the classification of the types of government is found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, where the terms *svarājya* and *vairājya* are used in the sense of republican constitutions. The regions which are credited with the two types of government[5] suggest that the greater portion of Āryan India, namely West and North, were studded with republican constitutions, which were transformed into or superseded by monarchies. An illustration of the point can be found in the case of the two trans-Himalayan tribes[6] Uttarakurus and Uttaramadras, who are described as having a *vairājya* form of government[7]. But when they migrated to the Indian plains, they established monarchies[8]. Again, when monarchy was dissolved, it made way for an artificial republic. The record of this process seems to have been preserved in the tradition

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1. *RV*, X. 97. 6.
2. Basham, *Wonder that was India*, p. 33.
3. Our italics.
4. "Among the most primitive races tribal authority is exercised almost universally in the democratic form of a general council, while governments representing the monarchic principles are almost entirely absent among peoples usually relegated to the lowest group. We regard this as a very remarkable fact concerning primitive social organization, and it has in most cases only been mentioned in passing in theoretical literature." G. Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes*, pp. 309-10, cf. pp. 310-16.
5. *AB*, VIII. 14.
6. B. C. Law, *India as Described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, p. 89.
7. *AB*, VIII. 14.
8. B. C. Law, op. cit., pp. 89. 93-96.

quoted by Arrian from Megasthenes, who states that the republican form of government was thrice established[1]. Although the Purāṇic traditions record the existence of *gaṇas*, they do not tell us anything about subsequent changes in their constitution. They refer to a *gaṇa* of a thousand kṣatriyas headed by Nābhāga, who might be identical with sage Nābhāka mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda*. But the descendants of Nābhāga are not mentioned by the Purāṇas. Patil argues that since the Nābhāgas were a republican tribe, the Purāṇas did not care to preserve their genealogy[2]. Nevertheless, if a reference in an inscription of Aśoka[3] is taken as referring to the Nābhāgas, it will appear that they continued to exist as a republican tribe for a long period. All this would suggest that the tribal republic was followed by monarchy and not *vice versa*.

The origin of the post-Vedic republics is discussed in a general way by D. R. Bhandarkar. On the basis of a passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* along with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, referred to him by R. C. Majumdar, he argues that since "the crucial passage speaks of *gaṇas* only in the case of Vaiśyas and not of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas or Śūdras, it appears that we had commercial *gaṇas* (*i.e.*, śreṇis) first among the Vaiśyas before there were political *gaṇas* among the Kṣatriyas".[4] He further states that just as the political *gaṇas* are divided into *kulas* or families, so also the commercial *gaṇas* are divided into *kulas*, as is known from the seals discovered at Bhiṭā and Basārh.[5] As has been shown earlier, the *gaṇa* was well known in its political and social aspects as early as the Vedic period, when there was not even the faintest idea of its commercial character. Moreover, it is needless to add that in the beginning only the functions of agriculture (*kṛṣi*) and rearing of cattle (*paśupālana*) were assigned to the vaiśya ; (*vāṇijya*) was a later development. Hence the hypothesis of Bhandarkar regarding the origin of the *gaṇa* has no basis in fact.

The real causes of the origin of the territorial, class-divided republics of the post-Vedic period have to be sought in the

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1. Arrian, IX, McCrindle, *India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 208.
2. *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, p. 53.
3. *R. E.* XIII.
4. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures*, 1918, pp. 169-70.
5. Ibid., p. 170.

universal reaction against the pattern of life as evolved in the later Vedic period. On the social plane the new movement sought to do away with the growing class and sex distinctions, as well as expensive and superstitious religious practices involving the senseless destruction of cattle wealth on a large scale, and on the political plane it wanted to do away with the hereditary kingship based on brāhmanical ideology and denial of all rights to the masses of the people. For lack of a new programme, the leaders of the new movement modelled their ideals on the basis of the past when there were no varṇa distinctions, no domination of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas over the masses and no coercive authority of the king depriving the overwhelming majority of the people of their rights.

If we consider the brāhmaṇical and Buddhist traditions together, Videha and Vaisāli would appear as the two main examples of monarchies transformed into republics. The only difficulty in accepting this inference is absence of signs of habitation in Vaiśālī before 600 B. C. This can be met if we presuppose that these were breakaway states from the parent stock[1], who had occupied some other areas in earlier times. The reason for breakaway may have been the demand made by members of the ruling class for a direct and equal share in the revenues collected from the peasants. In early Vedic times they obtained a portion of the spoils of war and tributes collected from the non-Āryans, but as heads of the conquering clans settled down as permanent princes, claiming to receive all revenues from settled peasants, Āryans and non-Āryans, other members of the clan were denigraded. They naturally resented the situation in which one of them emerged as the sole recipient of taxes and the undisputed organiser of war. The leading members of the clan therefore demanded the right to collect taxes from peasants and the right to bear arms and maintain their army, howsoever small in size. The polity that emerged as a result of this reaction was of the old tribal military democracy type only in form. In substance it was essentially oligarchical[2], because in the Licchavi state the vast

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1. Romila Thapar, *A History of India* (Pelican) i, 50-51.
2. Ruben thinks that each member of the oligarchy was the proprietor of a landed estate (*Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, p. 23), but of real ownership the oligarchs show no consciousness nor do they give any evidence in action.

mass of the non-rājās, slaves, hired labourers, etc., had no place in the republican assembly.[1]

Jayaswal thinks that the religious *saṅghas* were created on the pattern of political *saṅghas*[2], but the truth seems to be that both of them were created on the model of the primitive *gaṇas*, which hardly permitted distinctions of any kind. It seems to be particularly true of the early Jain religious order, which bears the same name *gaṇa*, with Mahāvīra as its *gaṇi* or leader, and nine among his prominent disciples as *gaṇadharas* or sectional leaders[3]. It was to recapture the past glory of equality in the simple tribal *gaṇas* that there arose the desire to overthrow the new forms of state and society. In doing so it was not possible to cancel the socio-political development of centuries at one stroke, and hence success was only partial. Kingship was dissolved and republics were set up, but the class-divided patriarchal society, bureaucracy, taxation system and an army for the coercion of the people remained. The tribal state, which probably guaranteed an equal share of food and equal rights to all its members, could not be resurrected in its pristine glory. Its new edition was the "distorted" republics of the Licchavis, Śākyas, etc., with all the paraphernalia of a monarchical state apparatus under the control of the kṣatriyas and the brāhmaṇas[4].

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1. Apparently dispossessed people were excluded from Vedic assemblies, but their number was very small and class distinctions were not sharp.

2. K. P. Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 42.

3. Mrs. S. Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism*, p. 61.

4. In case of post-Vedic *saṅgha-gaṇa* the "Kṣatriya aristocracy ranked higher in the social scale than the Brāhmaṇas and the gahapatis, not to speak of inferior classes". Ghoshal, *Indian Culture*, xii, 6.

Chapter IX

THE EARLY PARIṢAD

The nature of the later *pariṣad*, which is mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*, Aśokan inscriptions and the Dharmaśāstras[1], is fairly well known, but our knowledge of the early *pariṣad* is deficient. We can, however, form some idea of it on the basis of references in the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*, later Vedic literature and its frequent mention in the narrative portions of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. Although the epic and Purāṇic evidence cannot be considered as reliable as the Vedic evidence, it cannot be altogether discarded.

In a passage occurring in the *Ṛg Veda* Indra is celebrated for destroying with his thunderbolt the *pariṣadas* (companions) of the Asuras who obstruct rain[2]. This suggests that under the leadership of Indra, the Āryans fought against the organised bands of the pre-Āryans. A reference from the later portion of the same text shows that the *pariṣadvāns* (associates) of god Vasu desired to slay the son of Nṛṣad.[3] These references indicate the primitive military character of the *pariṣad*, mentioned in the case of Āryans as well as non-Āryans. Two other references throw some light on the nature of property, collectively owned by the members of this body. In a prayer, belonging to the early portion of the *Ṛg Veda* and reproduced by the *Atharva Veda*, the gods are described as "making us a conclave (*pariṣad*) rich in kine[4]." Sāyaṇa explains the terms *gavyaṃ pariṣadantaḥ* as *gosaṅgham*, and so Griffith translates it as a "herd of cattle". But since the term *gavyam* occurs as the adjective of *pariṣad*, the correct meaning seems to be 'an assembly rich in kine'[4], a feature which is not uncommon to an early assembly. Another passage from the same collection states that the wealth of the foe belongs to the *pariṣad*, and, in that

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1. K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Chs. XXX & XXXI; R.K. Mookerji, *Aśoka*, p. 148; V.R. R. Dikshitar, *Mauryan Polity*, pp. 133-34; A.S. Altekar, *Sources of Hindu Dharma*, Ch. VI.
2. *vivajreṇa pariṣado jaghāna*. *RV*, III. 33. 7.
3. *RV*, X. 61. 13.
4. *gavyaṃ pariṣadanto agman*. *RV*, IV. 2. 17 ; *AV*, XVIII. 3. 22.

connection, it expresses the desire of the people to be "masters of permanent riches."[1] In other words the booty is not confined to the leader but claimed collectively by the whole group which he leads. All this would suggest that the *pariṣad* owned kine and spoils of war in common.

In the *Yajur Veda* the epithet *pariṣadya* applied to Agni may point to his presence in the *pariṣad*[2]. This is corroborated by a Purāṇic reference, in which Pariṣatpavamāna is the name of a descendant of Agni[3]. It seems that, as in the case of the *vidatha*, the fire-god was supposed to grace the *pariṣad* with his presence. This indicates that among the Āryans the *pariṣad* also functioned as a religious assembly, in which they offered worship to Agni. A later Brāhmaṇa mentions *daivī pariṣad* (divine assembly) along with *sabhā* and *saṃsad*[4], two other terms for assembly. Clearly the divine assembly was a reflection of the worldly assembly prevalent among the Āryans. This is counterbalanced, however, by another reference, in which Ahirbudhnya, a form of Rudra (and therefore probably pre-Āryan), is represented as *pariṣadya*, which term is explained by Sāyaṇa as (*sabhāyogya*) worthy of attending the *sabhā*.[5] A passage from a later Brāhmaṇa suggests that the *pariṣad* was a royal assembly, in which members evinced anxiety for securing victory over their opponent in debate. In the reference one party declares : "I am a supporter of the king and you are the supporter of a kingless state,[6]" which implies that it was not without tough fight that the champions of the kingless state gave way to those of monarchy. Perhaps it indicates the process by which the king was gaining his foothold in the early *pariṣad* with the help of his supporters.

The few references that are found in the early Vedic literature do not give any direct evidence of the tribal character of

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1. *pariṣadyaṃ hi araṇasya rekṇo nityasya rāyaḥ patayaḥ syāma. RV*, VII. 4. 7. The translation of the term *pariṣadyam* by Wilson and Griffith seems to be faulty. It should mean "belonging to the *pariṣad*", a meaning which is in keeping with the military and tribal nature of the early assembly.
2. *VS*, V. 32.
3. *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, II. 12. 22.
4. *Jaimini Upaniṣad Br.*, II. 11. 13-14.
5. *TB*, III. 1. 2. 9.
6. *parṣadi rājani cottaravādī bhavatyuttaravādī bhavati. Sāṁavidhāna Br.*, II. 7. 5. The passage has been interpreted on the basis of Sāyaṇa's commentary.

the early *pariṣad*, but the oft-quoted passage from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and relating to the *pariṣad* of the Pañcālas in later Vedic literature shows that it was primarily their clan assembly presided over by the king[1]. The epic and Purāṇic references point not only to the tribal but also to the military and partly matriarchal character of the *pariṣad*. It has been shown that Ahirbudhnya, a form of Rudra, is called *pariṣadya*, but in the *Mahābhārata*, Skanda, the son of Śiva, is associated with the *pāriṣadas* (obviously the members of the *pariṣad*) at numerous places. Śiva, who is described as *gaṇādhyakṣa*, is also called *pāriṣadpriya*, one who loves the company of the members of the *parṣiad*[2]. There is some evidence that *pāriṣadas* (companions) were the kins of their leader Skanda. These fearful and curious-looking comrades represented as the male children of Skanda were born as a result of the striking of his thunder[3]. The gist of the myth seems to be that Skanda and his followers belonged to the same clan. In this sense the relation of the *pāriṣadas* to Skanda is similar to that of the Marut-gaṇas with their father Rudra. Their tribal character can be further inferred from the statement that clad in diverse kinds of skins the *pāriṣadas* speak diverse languages and different provincial dialects[4]. They can be thus compared to primitive peoples, among whom every tribe has its own dialect—its basis being not territorial. The hypothesis about the tribal character is further strengthened by the comparison of their faces to various kinds of animals and birds such as cocks, dogs, wolves, hares, camels, sheep, jackals, etc[5]. Such associations with animals probably disclose their totemic origin. Since the totems of primitive tribes owed their origin to the sources of their food supply[6], in many cases the edible species of animals might suggest totemic and tribal connections. It may, however, be noted that in the long list of animals and birds connected with the *pāriṣadas* horse, which is generally associated with the Āryans, is conspicuous by its absence.

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1. *Chāndogya Up.*, V. 3; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* VI. 2; *ŚB* XIV. 9. 1. 1.
2. *Mbh.*, X. 7. 8. If not otherwise specified the edition used in this chapter is Kumbakonam.
3. *skandapāriṣadān...vajraprahārāt skandasya jajñur...Mbh.* (Chitrasala Press), III. 228. 1.
4. *Mbh.* (Cal.), IX. 45. 102.
5. Ibid., IX. 46. 79-88.
6. George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, p. 37.

The military character of the *pariṣad* indicated by Vedic references is confirmed by epic and Purāṇic evidence. In the *Matsya Purāṇa* the *Śiva-gaṇas* with awkward forms, who fought against the Asuras, are described as *pārṣadas*[1]. In numerous references in the *Mahābhārata* the *pāriṣadas* are described as "fearful people equipped with uplifted weapons" of various kinds. The same expression *pārisadairghorairnānāpraharaṇod-yataiḥ* is used at several places.[2] At the time of his investiture with the rank of generalissimo for fighting against the Asuras, Skanda or Kārtikeya is supplied with mighty soldiers (*pāriṣadas*) by Brahmā, Pūṣan and Vindhya[3]. Invariably represented as mighty and impetuous fighters, the *pāriṣadas* made over to Skanda are portrayed as armed with terrible weapons and fighting with large pieces of stones (*mahāpāṣāṇayodhinaḥ*)[4]. Passionately fond of battle this is the one hobby in which they take great delight. They were so brave that even the foremost among the gods were no match for them[5]. Perhaps even in times of peace they continued their predatory activities against the Āryan people, for they are stigmatised as stealing the life of little children.[6]

Although several gods had their own *pāriṣadas*, who were lent to Skanda in the fight against the Daityas, generally speaking the *pariṣad* was led by Śiva or Skanda. There is a whole chapter in the *Śalya Parva* dealing with the *pāriṣadas* under the leadership of Skanda[7]. It informs us that, accompanied by them and the members of the matriarchal *gaṇas*, he proceeded for the destruction of the Daityas[8]. How was Skanda made their leader ? There is perhaps some indication that he was elected. First, recognising him as their leader the gods willingly furnished him with their *pāriṣadas*. Secondly, when Skanda was born, persons of different varṇas sought his protection and came to be called *pāriṣadas* by the brāhmaṇas[9]. All this indi-

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1. V. R. R. Dikshitar, *Purāṇic Index*, ii, 321. Both the terms *pārṣada* and *pāriṣada* are used in the sense of companion.
2. *Mbh.* (Chitrashala Press), III. 109. 3, 272. 78.
3. *Mbh.*, IX. 46, 23-26, 44, 49-51.
4. Ibid., IX. 46. 108, 111-14, 49-50.
5. Ibid., IX. 45. 95.
6. *Mbh.* (Chitrashala Press), III. 228. 2.
7. Ch. 46.
8. *Mbh.* (Cal.), IX. 47. 53-54.
9. *Mbh.* (Chitrashala Press), III. 225. 31.

cates willing acceptance of his leadership by his followers, although the second reference reflects a period of anarchy when irrespective of varṇa considerations people offered their allegiance to some lord, and hence it might suggest a developed stage of myth-making, perhaps in post-Maurya times. This lateness, however, cannot be ascribed to some other references to the *pariṣad*. In later times the *pariṣad* is always associated with the king, but the early epic or Purāṇic references hardly make mention of any king having his *pariṣad*. We may therefore presume that when the commander was elevated to the position of the king, the *pāriṣads*, whose number fell down, assumed the character of councillors in peace rather than comrades-in-arms.

There is some idea about the size of the early *pāriṣad*. The tradition of a large *pariṣad*, of 1000 members, is preserved both in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the *Rāmāyaṇa*[1]. In connection with the presentation of fighting companions (*pāriṣadadāna*) made by different gods it is said that they were joined by other such comrades as came in thousands[2]. An early lawbook states that those who are without *mantra* (sacred counsel) and *vrata* (vow), even if accompanied by thousands of companions, cannot shine in the *pāriṣad*[3]. These statements give sufficient indication of the big size of this assembly in earlier times.

In post-Vedic times the *mantripariṣad* in particular and the *pariṣad* in general shows no trace of having any woman member. But the use of the term *pāriṣadī* suggests otherwise in the case of the early *pariṣad*. In formulas accompanying the water oblations to ancestors, oblations have to be offered not only to the *pārṣadas* of Brahmā, Rudra, Vighna, Skanda, Viṣṇu, Vaivasvat (either Yama or Manu) and Dhanvantari but also to their wives and *pārṣadis* (lady companions)[4]. This leaves no doubt that at one time women were also regarded as the members of the *pariṣad*. There can be little question about the antiquity of the formulas referring to *pārṣadīs*, for they occur in the second book of Baudhāyana, considered as a part of the original Dharmasūtra[5]. In point of time this might reflect the situation

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1. Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 302.
2. *sahasrasaḥ pārisadāḥ kumāramupatasthire. Mbh.* (Cal.), IX. 46. 78.
3. *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*, I. 1. 16.
4. Ibid., II. 5. 12; also in ms. O given in Appendix I.
5. Ibid., Introduction, pp. ix-x.

existing towards the end of the Vedic period. The practice of having woman members of the *pariṣad*, however, was perhaps confined to the South to which Baudhāyana belonged, and where even in later times matrilineal traces persisted. Thus the association of woman with the *pāriṣad* cannot be denied, although it has to be admitted that the evidence on this point is not as strong as on her membership of the *vidatha* and *sabhā*.

Something can be said about the relation between the *pariṣad* and *gaṇa* on the basis of post-Vedic sources. Some of the references do not suggest any difference between the two. The *Śiva-gaṇas* fighting against the Asuras are described as *pārṣadas*; which implies that in later times the *gaṇa* and *pariṣad* are considered identical in this case. In the epic and Purāṇic references both of them are generally associated with Śiva; the *gaṇa* is frequently referred to as the assembly of the Maruts, the sons of Śiva. The *pariṣad* and *gaṇa* are placed on the same footing in connection with voluntary offerings, which are made to the former just after the *gaṇa* and *gaṇapati*[1]. Further, the enumeration of about a hundred matriarchal *gaṇas* may indicate woman membership[2] in the case of the *gaṇa*,—a feature which is probably also true of the *pariṣad*. The statement that Skanda proceeded to fight against the Asuras accompanied by the *pāriṣadas* and the mother *gaṇas*[3] suggests some distinction between the two institutions, but its exact nature is nowhere clearly stated.

All this would suggest that the early *pariṣad* was a tribal military assembly, partly matriarchal and partly patriarchal. It had hardly anything to do with the king and brāhmaṇas, who came to dominate it in later times. Proceeding on the assumption that matriarchy preceded patriarchy and that the evolution of kingship and varṇa society could take place only by the end of the Vedic period, the early *pariṣad* may be regarded as an institution of Vedic times. But how do we account for comparatively rare references to it in the Veda? First, out of the four references to the *pariṣad* in this collection, three occur in what is regarded as its kernel, which is sufficient proof of its antiquity. Second, paucity of data in Vedic literature may have been due to the pre-Āryan character

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1. *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, II. 8. 9.
2. *Mbh.*, IX. 47.
3. Ibid., IX. 47. 54.

of the *pariṣad*, which can be inferred from its association with Śiva and Skanda and the absence of horse in the list of its totems. Pre-Āryan practices and institutions naturally found their way into the epic and Purāṇic traditions in post-Maurya and Gupta times, for in course of the preceding centuries elements of non-Āryan culture had been sufficiently imbibed by the Āryans. Third, the *Mahābhārata* references, which occur chiefly in connection with the exploits of Śiva or Skanda, although not forming part of the main narrative, undoubtedly record the tradition of earliest times. They rarely occur in the didactic or Smṛti sections of the epic and the Purāṇas, as is the case with the exposition of the *rājadharma* (duties of the king) in the *Śānti Parva*. If the epic and the Purāṇic traditions can be utilised for constructing our earliest dynastic history, there is no reason why they should not be tapped for the study of our earliest social and political institutions.

In judging the character of the early *pariṣad* on the basis of two sets of evidence, Vedic and post-Vedic, there is always the danger of slipping into the chronological fallacy. But the relevant references can convey some meaning only if they are examined according to the methodology of Pargiter, namely, the coincidence between the Vedic and epic-Purāṇic material. Apart from the independent value of the epic references to the *pariṣad*, their broad agreement in several respects with the Vedic counterpart imparts to them some measure of authenticity. This shows that in its essentials there is hardly any difference between the Vedic and the epic *pariṣad*. Both the sources show that it was a tribal military assembly. But as will be indicated later, there is a world of difference between the structure and functions of the *pariṣad* as known from the early Vedic and epic sources and the one as known from the Jātakas, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, Aśokan inscriptions and the Dharmaśāstras.

The transitional phase in the history of the *pariṣad* can be ascribed to the period represented by the Upaniṣads and Gṛhya-sūtras. It seems that, on account of the growth of varṇas and state power towards the close of the later Vedic period, the *pariṣad* tended to become partly an academy and partly a royal council dominated by the priests, who functioned as teachers and advisers. The academic character of this institution is suggested by references in some Upaniṣads and one Gṛhya-

sūtra. According to the latter the *pariṣad* is a seminary in which the pupil sits near the teacher[1]. The evidence that it functioned as a royal council is provided by the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*, wherein the *pariṣad* is represented as conducting debate under the chairmanship of its *Īśāna* (president). We further learn that in the course of debate members not only desired to prove themselves superior and brilliant over others but also tried to disarm the wrath of the president and win his favour[2]. The commentary of Harihara to a passage of the same source shows that this body was attended mainly by the brāhmaṇas,[3] but perhaps this reflects the composition of the *pariṣad* in the age of the commentator rather than in that of the text.

That the *pariṣad* acted as a royal council and its members exercised enormous influence upon the king is known from Pāṇini's grammar, in which the king is called *pariṣadbala*. The same source indicates that the *pariṣad* did not confine itself to one function, the same body performing social, academic and political functions[4]. Although Pāṇini does not throw any light on the composition of this body, either as a royal council or as a literary academy, the *pariṣad* seems to have been a small and distinguished body. Nobody could be a member of the *pariṣad* (*pāriṣad* or *pāriṣadya*) unless he was duly qualified or eligible for it[5]. Thus towards the close of the Vedic period the character of the *pariṣad* had undergone a qualitative change. The name remained the same, but its connotation became different.

The new character of the *pariṣad* stabilised during the pre-Maurya period. In the early brāhmaṇical law-books the *pariṣad* took on the character of a body of legal experts. The *pariṣad* as known to the Dharmasūtras was an institution engaged in teaching and intellectual discussions, but its learned members were now inclined more towards law than teaching. In respect of its structure, the relevant passages from the Dharmasūtras justify the statement that it was essentially a council of the

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1. *Khadira Gṛhyasūtra*, III. 1. 25; *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra* (*SBE*), III. 2. 50.
2. *PGS*, III. 13. 4. 5.
3. Ibid.
4. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 399. For academic functions of the *pariṣad* see op. cit., pp. 297-98.
5. Ibid., p 399.

priests.[1] Baudhāyana, Gautama and Vasiṣṭha describe its composition more or less in similar terms[2]. Baudhāyana clearly states that the ten members of the *pariṣad* should be *viprās*[3] (brāhmaṇas). The details of qualifications laid down for the membership of the *pariṣad* in other references too leave no doubt that it was to be formed mainly of the priests.

The process by which the *pariṣad* was reduced to the position of a small body dominated by the brāhmaṇas can be linked up with the break-up of the old tribal society into varṇas and the emergence of the brāhmaṇas as one of the dominant classes. The supremacy which the brāhmaṇas enjoyed from the end of Vedic period[4] is naturally reflected in the composition of the *pariṣad* oulined in the brāhmaṇical law-books.

The process of reduction in the size of the *pariṣad* was probably gradual. It is possible that in between the small *pariṣad* of the Dharmasūtras, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* and Aśokan inscriptions on the one hand, and the early *pariṣad* on the other, intervened an intermediate *pariṣad* of comparatively bigger size corresponding to the *parisā* of the Jātakas or to the council of thirty-seven amātyas in the *Śānti Parva*.[5] Perhaps Kauṭilya's quotation of the views of old thinkers that the *pariṣad* should consist respectively of twenty, sixteen or twelve members refers to such an intermediate stage[6]. At any rate the *mantri-pariṣad* mentioned in Kauṭilya, or the legal *pariṣad* of the brāhmaṇas, was basically different from the early *pariṣad*, to which we cannot attach any constitutional or political significance as we do to the *sabhā* and *samiti*.

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1. E. Hopkins. "Social and Military Position of the Ruling Caste etc.", *JAOS*, xiii, 148.
2. *Baudh.*, 1. 1. 8. 9; *Gautama*, XXVIII. 50-51 ; *Vas. Dh. S.*, III. 20.
3. *Baudh.*, 1. 1. 8. 9.
4. Cf. U.N. Ghoshal, "The Status of Brāhmaṇas in the Dharmasūtras," *IHQ*, xxiii, pp. 83-92. H. C. Ray, "Position of the Brāhmaṇas in the Arthaśāstra", *Proceedings of the All-India Oriental Conference*, 1924.
5. R. N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 135.
6. *AŚ*, I. 15.

Chapter X

RATNAHAVĪMṢI CEREMONY

Perhaps no other single ritual throws so much light on the political organization of the Āryans in the later Vedic period as the *ratnahavīṃṣī* ceremony, which forms a part of the *rājasūya* coronation sacrifice. In commenting upon its importance we have to acknowledge our debt to Weber, Jayaswal and Ghoshal, who have given sufficient thought to the examination of the later Vedic texts bearing on this subject.[1] But there is still some scope for the further study of the problem, if we bear in mind the regional differences in the composition of the source-material, the economic background of the period, the comparative study of the early institutions of the other Indo-European peoples, and the difficulty of interpreting the exact functions of the ratnins (jewel-holders).

According to the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony the sacrificing king went to the house of each ratnin and offered oblations to the appropriate deity there. The names of these ratnins are mentioned in five texts, on the basis of which Ghoshal has prepared a chart,[2] which is reproduced on page 104 with some modification.

Jayaswal enumerates eleven ratnins[3], but the names which occur in one list do not find mention in another list, with the result that the total number of the persons whose houses are visited by the king for offering oblations to various gods comes to fifteen. As regards the order and mention of their names, we observe a marked difference between the various other texts of the *Yajus* on the one hand and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* on the other. The list in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, however, is more in conformity with that given in the Saṃhitās of the *Yajus*. Leaving aside the differences with the list of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* for

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1. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, pp. 200-5; Ghoshal, *Historiography & Other Essays*, pp. 249-54.

2. Ghoshal, op. cit., facing p. 249. Actually these are not known as ratnins in the *KS & TS*, which appellation is applied to them later in the *TB* and *ŚB*.

3. Op. cit., pp. 201-3.

LIST OF RATNINS AT THE RATNAHAVĪMṢI

TS, I. 8. 9	*MS*, II. 6. 5; IV. 3	*KS*, XV. 4	*TB*, I. 7. 3 ff.	*ŚB*, V. 3. 1 ff.
1. brahman	1. brahman	1. purohita for Bṛhaspati	1. brahman	1. senānī
2. rājanya	2. rājanya	2. rājā for Indra	2. rājanya	2. purohita
3. mahiṣī	3. mahiṣī	3. mahiṣī for Aditi	3. mahiṣī	3. sacrificer
4. parivṛkti	4. parivṛkti	4. parivṛkti for Naiṛta	4. vāvātā	4. mahiṣī
5. senānī	5. senānī	5. senānī for Agni	5. parivṛktī	5. sūta
6. sūta	6. saṃgrahītṛ	6. saṃgrahītṛ for Aśvins	6. senāni	6. grāmaṇī
7. grāmaṇī	7. kṣattṛ	7. ksattṛ for Savitar	7. sūta	7. kṣattṛ
8. kṣattṛ	8. sūta	8. sūta for Varuṇa	8. grāmaṇī	8. saṃgrahītṛ
9. saṃgrahītṛ	9. vaiśyagrāmaṇī	9. vaisya-grāmaṇī for Maruta	9. kṣattṛ	9. bhāgadugha
10. bhāgadugha	10. bhāgadugha	10. bhāgadugha for Pūṣan	10. samgrahītṛ	10. akṣāvāpa
11. akṣāvāpa	11. & 12. takṣan and rathakāra	11. akṣāvāpa and	11. bhāgadugha	11. gonikartana
	13. & 14. akṣāvāpa and govikarta	12. govyaccha for Rudra	12. akṣāvāpa	12. pālāgala
				13. parivṛkti (not mentioned as ratnin.)

later consideration, let us, as a whole, examine the lists which seem to have been composed in the land of the Kuru-Pañcāla. That the *rājasūya* sacrifice was performed in this land is evident from the formula of besprinkling, according to which the people to be ruled by the king are represented to be Bhāratas, Kurus and Pañcālas[1]. Therefore the institution of the ratnins probably functioned in Madhyadeśa. Barring some changes which occurred when the Āryans moved further east into Videha, this institution, as would appear from the evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, continued in existence till the end of the Vedic period.

If we accept the contention of Von Schroeder, who regards *Maitrāyaṇī* and *Kāṭhaka* Saṃhitās earlier in point of time[2], it would appear that the earliest list as given in the former text consists of fourteen ratnins. At the head of the list stands the brāhmaṇa, who occupies this position in three texts and also in a fourth where he is known as the *purohita*, a title applied to him in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, where he occupies the second position. The brāhmaṇa, at whose house the pap is to be offered by the king to Bṛhaspati, the chief priest of the gods, obviously represents the newly organized priestly class. It has been argued with great force of logic that the brāhmaṇas were pre-Āryan priests. The fact that they stand at the head of the ratnins speaks not only of their ingenuity in ingratiating themselves into the favour of the conquerors but also of the great tolerance shown by the new-comers.

The second name in four texts is that of the rājanya, with the difference that he is mentioned as rājā in one text. If we accept the interpretation of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* this ratnin would appear to be the king himself, but it sounds strange that the king's name should get the third place in the *Śatapatha* and the second place in other texts. It is almost clear that the rājanya, at whose house the oblation is to be made to Indra, the warrior *par excellence*, represents the warrior class of the kṣatriyas.

The third name in all the lists, excepting that of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, is that of the *mahiṣī*. The term literally means the chief queen, which shows that the king used to marry several

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1. *TS*, I. 8. 10; Keith, *HOS*, xviii, p. xciii.
2. *HOS*, xviii, pp. xci-iv.

queens. Jayaswal thinks that the queen is provided here to complete the spiritual self of the king-elect[1]. But the explanation given in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* does not warrant this assumption. It seems that the *mahiṣī*, at whose house oblation is to be offered to Aditi, represents the goddess Earth, which, like a milch cow and mother, sustains men and fulfils all their desires[2]. This would indicate the importance of the matriarchal element in later Vedic polity,—a point which is also supported by the mention of the two other queens as ratnins.

The fourth name in three Saṃhitās and the fifth name in one Brāhmaṇa is that of the *parivṛkti*. She is not formally included in the list of the ratnins in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, but, after the enumeration of the ratnins, appears as a discarded wife who has no son and whom the king visits in order to free himself from the evil that might overtake him[3]. Although the object stated here is not to secure the support of such a wife, there can be no doubt that she was considered capable of causing harm to the king. Unlike the other ratnins, she was not thought to be a source of positive help to the ruler, but a source of opposition which had to be disarmed. We may add that the *vāvātā* or the favourite wife is mentioned as a ratnin only in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, where she occupies the fourth place and is followed by the *parivṛkti*.

The fifth name in three Saṃhitās is that of the *senānī*, who is assigned the sixth place in one Brāhmaṇa and the first place in another. Originally the *senānī* seems to have been the leader of the host, but in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* he seems to have functioned as the commander-in-chief.[4] Sāyaṇa's characterization of the *senānī* as śūdra may have been inspired by brāhmaṇical antipathy towards the warrior class, and therefore cannot be taken seriously.

In our discussion above, five ratnins have been arranged in the order in which they seem to have been placed by most texts. But it is difficult to arrange the remaining ratnins in any definite order of importance. None the less, we can examine the position of these six ratnins, namely, *sūta*, *grāmaṇī*, *kṣattṛ*, *saṃgrahītṛ*, *bhāgadugha* and *akṣāvāpa*, who are common to all the lists.

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1. *Hindu Polity*, p. 201.
2. V. 3. 1. 4.
3. V. 3. 1. 13.
4. V. 3. 1. 1.

The *sūta* is taken by several writers in the sense of a court minstrel or chronicler.[1] This interpretation suits the epic *sūta*, but the fact that oblation at his house is offered to Varuṇa for which the sacrificial fee of a horse is prescribed shows that this celebrity was a charioteer.[2] In another reference this functionary is considered identical with the *sthapati*[3], who may be taken variously as governor, chief, architect, master-builder, carpenter and wheelwright.[4] Of these the meanings of governor[5] and chief judge[6] have been preferred. But in view of the association of the *sūta* with chariot, probably the meaning wheelwright would better suit the context. Probably the *sūta* functioned both as charioteer and wheelmaker. It is perhaps on account of this association with manual labour that in later times he fell in esteem. But his importance in the earlier period was well recognised, for in the *Atharva Veda* he and the *grāmaṇī* figure among those whom the newly consecrated king wishes to make his support (*upastins*).[7]

The *grāmaṇī* is mentioned as *vaiśya-gramaṇī* in two Saṃhitās which indicates that he was the head of the people (*viś*) living in the village. It is suggested that he was a hereditary territorial proprietor living in the capital,[8] but there is nothing to show that he always lived at the capital. We should think that still the kingdoms of the Bhāratas, Kurus and Pañcālas was not so large as to render the movement of the rulres difficult in their respective states. The exact functions of the *grāmaṇī* are difficult to determine. In all likelihood he still continued the old practice of leading little groups of people to the battlefield, in addition to which he may have acquired functions of a general supervisory nature over the villagers. Jayaswal thinks that the *grāmaṇī* was also the head of the township,[9] but it is doubtful that urban life had developed on any considerable scale during the later Vedic period. Similarly the conjecture that

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1. Ghoshal, op. cit., chart facing p. 249.
2. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 5.
3. Ibid., V. 4. 4. 17-18.
4. Monier-Williams, *Sansk-Eng. Dictionary*, s. v. *sthapati*.
5. Eggeling, *SBE.*, xli, 111.
6. Ghoshal, *Historiography & Other Essays*, p. 272.
7. *AV*, III. 5. 7.
8. Eggeling, *SBE*, xli, p. 61, fn.
9. *Hindu Polity*, p. 202.

royal dues were received through the *grāmaṇī*[1] does not seem to have been well founded, for, as will be shown later, this function was probably performed by the *bhāgadugha*.

To the *kṣattr* are assigned the meanings of carver and chamberlain.[2] But perhaps the first meaning is not suitable because this better applies to the *takṣan* and therefore makes this interpretation superfluous in the case of the *kṣattṛ*. He therefore should be better taken in the sense of chamberlain who was employed to hold umbrella over the king. Like the *sūta*, his position also suffered a decline in later times when he came to be condemned as a member of the mixed caste. His association with Savitā, the impeller of gods, does not throw much light on his position.

There is also difference of opinion about the position of the *saṃgrahītṛ*, who is regarded as the master of treasury by Jayaswal on the basis of later commentators.[3] According to Jayaswal in the *Arthaśāstra* this office-bearer is called *sannidhātā*. But there is no point in projecting later ideas into the meaning of the term in the earlier period. The literal meaning of the term is the holder of the reins or the driver,[4] and hence this ratnin should be understood in the sense of a charioteer of an inferior kind, in contrast to the *sūta* who acts as a *sārathi* to the chief warrior. In the ritual of the cattle-raid the chariot plays such a vital part[5] that it is no wonder that so much weight is given to different kinds of people associated with the making and moving of the chariot. That the *saṃgrahītṛ* was a charioteer can be also inferred from the fact that at his house oblation is to be offered to the Aśvins,[6] who are represented as swift-moving gods in the sky having horse as their means of conveyance (*vāhana*).

Though somewhat low in various lists a very significant ratnin mentioned is the *bhāgadugha*. Although at one place this term is taken in the sense of the distributor of shares,[7] an

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1. *CHI*, i, 117.
2. Keith, *HOS*, xviii, 120; Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 202; Ghoshal *Historiography and other Essays*, chart facing page 249. For its Pali equivalent *khatta* see *DN*, i. 112.
3. *Hindu Polity*, p. 202.
4. Ibid., fn. 12.
5. *ŚB*, v. 4.3.
6. Ibid., V. 3. 1. 8.
7. *SBE*, xli, 63, fn. 1 on *ŚB*, I. 1. 2. 17. Rau (*Staat und Gesellschaft*

attribute applied to Pūṣan, its literal meaning undoubtedly is the milcher of the share. That the terms for the tax-collectors were directly associated with the taxes they collected can be inferred from the use of the term *balisādhaka* in the post-Vedic period.[1] The office of the *bhāgadugha* naturally might suggest that from this time onwards taxes were collected regularly, *bhāga* taking the place of voluntary *bali* of the age of the *Ṛg Veda* when the people did not pay fixed taxes to the king but brought him voluntary presents.[2] Since at the house of the *bhāgadugha* oblation is offered to Pūṣan[3], the god of cattle,in all likelihood this tax was collected in cattle rather than in grain, which latter practice first largely began in the age of the Buddha. In later Vedic times the *bhāgadugha* may have collected the surplus food from the herdsmen and peasants and disbursed it among those who served the king.

The eleventh ratnin common to all the lists is the *akṣāvāpa*. The literal meaning of the term is dice-thrower. But it is argued that for the king to approach the officer-in-charge of gambling seems to be something very extraordinary, and hence on the basis of the *akṣaśālā* mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya this ratnin is interpreted as the officer-in-charge of state accounts.[4] But, as suggested earlier, later evidence cannot be always used in elucidating the functions of the officers of the later Vedic period. There is no doubt that the *akṣāvāpa* was the dice-thrower, for in this connection reference is made to the gaming-board and dice.[5] In the generic sense therefore the *akṣāvāpa* may be taken as an officer connected with sports, which constituted one of the important activities of the Vedic people organized in popular assemblies.

Finally, we have to consider the remaining four ratnins, whose names occur in one list or the other, thus making the total

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im Alter Indischen, pp. 110-111 with foot-notes) asserts that he was a server of food.

1. *Jāt.*, v, 106.

2. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 166. The presumption that taxes were first voluntary and then became compulsory is strengthened by some examples from subsequent history. The land grants of the Maitrakas of Valabhi refer to officers who were "charged with the forcible collection of the unrealised so-called voluntary gifts of the subjects" (*anutbanna-dānasa.nudgrāhaka*). U. N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 221-22.

3. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 9.

4. Jayaswal, op. cit., pp. 202-3.

5. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 10.

of fifteen. Of these the name of the *govikartana* occurs with variation in three lists, *govikarta* in the *Maitrāyaṇī* and *gavyaccha* in the *Kāṭhaka* editions of the *Yajus*, and *gāvikartana* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The literal meaning of the term is butcher or the killer of the cows. And hence this officer has been understood in the sense of chief huntsman.[1] The theory that this officer corresponds to Megasthenes' officer being in charge of the huntsmen who cleared the land of wild beasts and fowls which devoured the seeds[2] seems to be without any basis. He may have acted as the keeper of the games and forests. Perhaps his duty was to get sufficient game for the royal household, showing thereby that hunting still continued as one of the chief occupations of the people and that beef was one of the chief items in their food.

The two other ratnins, *takṣan* and *rathakāra*, are mentioned in two Saṃhitās of the *Yajus*. There can be hardly any dispute about their meaning; one stands for the carpenter and the other for the chariot-maker. The fact that all kinds of metals are prescribed as the sacrificial fee in the ceremonies performed at their homes shows that they owed their importance to their association with metal-working.[3] It seems that the *rathakāra* and *takṣan* owed their positions to their original membership of the Āryan tribes, which had gradually disintegrated into varṇas, since in the *Atharva Veda*, the *rathakāra* and the *karmāra* (whose place is now taken by the *takṣan*) are clearly described as part of the *viś* (people) round the king.[4] Their inclusion in the two *Yajus* collections therefore should be viewed less as a priestly manipulation rather than as their recognition as important elements in the state. That the experts in crafts enjoyed high position in primitive societies cannot be denied.[5]

The *pālāgala* should be considered as the last in the list of the ratnins, for his name occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which was composed towards the end of the later Vedic period. He acted as a messenger carrying errands from place to place.[6] We

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1. Ghoshal, *Historiography and Other Essays*, the chart facing p. 249.
2. Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 203.
3. *MS*, II. 6, 5; *Ap. ŚS*, XVIII. 10. 17.
4. III. 5. 6.
5. Alexander Goldenweiser, *Anthropology*, p. 386.
6. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 11.

may note that messengers play an important part in the political organization of primitive tribes in Australia. They are used by the headmen, councils and other groups in authority to communicate to particular individuals, local groups, or tribes information about holding a meeting, a ceremony or a communal feast, or organizing an expedition for blood-revenge.[1] On this analogy, although the *pālāgala* was considered a śūdra, his importance in the political organization of the later Vedic period cannot be underestimated. The name *pālāgala* does not appear to be āryan but most probably stands for some aboriginal tribe living in Videha, which marked the easternmost expansion of the Āryans in the age represented by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. This can also be inferred from the use of the term *pālāgalī*, condemned as a śūdra wife,[2] who may have been wedded from the aboriginal people. Incidentally the sacrificial fee of a skin-covered bow, leather quivers, and a red turban, for the courier[3] suggests that he was equipped with these weapons in order to defend himself on the way against unfriendly elements.

The inclusion of the *pālāgala* in the list of the ratnins is a striking feature of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* list. So is the elevation of the *senānī* to the top of the list of the ratnins. This also can be explained on the basis of regional differences. Although the Āryan expansion in Videha is attributed by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* to the pioneering efforts of Videgha Māthava, and Agni Vaiśvānara who seems to have cleared the forests by burning it,[4] it is reasonable to think that such expansion involved wars with the result that the *senānī* or the military leader came to the forefront. Although the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has many passages testifying to the pretensions of the brāhmaṇas, who claim the immunity of their property, it gives the impression that the kṣatriyas were asserting themselves not only in the political field, but, what is more significant, in the intellectual field which was considered to be the monopoly of the brāhmaṇas. Several kṣatriya rulers mentioned in that text and the concurrent stories of the Upaniṣads, namely, Aśvapati Kaikeya, Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, Vaideha

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1. Alexander Goldenweiser, op. cit., p. 380.
2. *Śūdras*, p. 50.
3. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 11.
4. Ibid., 1. 4. 1. 10-17; cf. *SBE*, xii, pp. xli-iii.

Janaka and Ajātaśatru of Kāśī, are noted for their philosophic attainments, disputing with and instructing the priests in philosophy.[1] It is no wonder then that the *senānī*, who represents the warrior class, is placed at the head of the ratnins and the *purohita* is given the second place in the present text. The lack of internal consistency in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* in this respect can be explained by presuming a later redaction of this text in the brāhmaṇical interests.

Another indication of the growing military and patriarchal atmosphere in which this Brāhmaṇa seems to have been composed is to be found in the complete omission of the *vāvātā* from the list of ratnins and the mention of the *parivṛkti* not as a regular ratnin but at the end of the formal enumeration of all the ratnins. This indicates gradual deterioration in the position of women of which we get more evidence in post-Vedic times.

Lastly, we might take into account the omission of the *rathakāra* and *takṣan* from the list of the ratnins in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. This should be taken as proof of the growing contempt of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas for the artisans engaged in manual labour. The next step is to be found in pre-Maurya times when the *rathakāra* is condemned as a mixed caste in the Dharmasūtras and as a follower of *hīna sippa* (low trade) in the early Buddhist texts. The origins of this contempt can be traced back to the age of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* when social classes based on the division of labour tended to be stratified into castes. Thus the ratnin list as given in the present text is richer in content and more elaborate in regard to the functions of the ratnins, and marks a transition from a partly tribal and matriarchal society into a completely class and patriarchal society.

An interesting anthropological explanation of the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony has been given by Heesterman. In his opinion this ceremony is based on the idea of marriage and rebirth, which is most clearly represented by the group of royal consorts, who act as wombs.[2] He thinks that the charioteers and the representatives of the four varṇas can also be connected with the idea of the embryonic covers.[3] But this interpretation can hardly be put on the explanations of the rituals given in the Saṃhitās or

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1. *CHI*, i, 113.
2. *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 55.
3. Ibid., p. 56.

the Brāhmaṇas. Further, by the later Vedic period the institutions of wife and mother had been so well established that the very idea of entering the wombs of his wives and thus treating them as his so many mothers must be regarded as extremely reprehensible and repulsive not only to the royal sacrificer but also to the brāhmaṇa priests. Heesterman contends that the names of the ratnins do not provide us with any clue to the actual organization of the government.[1] He points out that royal consorts, governmental or household dignitaries, and artisans are incoherently mixed up in the list.[2] But at the early stage, when life had not been so much compartmentalized and purely governmental functions not completely differentiated from other functions, there is nothing incongruous about the banding together of several functionaries. Several passages convey in no uncertain terms the political importance of the personages whom the king visited in connection with the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony. It is repeatedly stated that the king regards the ratnins as the sustainers of his realm, a point which has been stressed by several writers.[3] The ratnins are described as the givers and takers of the kingdom (*rāṣṭrasya pradātāraḥ, ete pādātāraḥ*)).[4] One text describes them as "limbs of the ruling power"[5] (*kṣatrasya vā etanyaṅgāni*), which expression reminds us of the seven limbs of the state mentioned by Manu and other authorities. The same text avers that, if the ratnins become vigorous and energetic, the state also becomes vigorous and energetic.[6] The formula recited at the house of most ratnins states that the king is consecrated for the sake of the ratnin and that he makes the ratnin his faithful follower.[7] That the *purohita*, the *rājanya*, the *mahiṣi*, the *sūta*, the *grāmaṇī*, the *kṣattṛ* and the *saṃgrahītṛ* were persons of distinction is also corroborated by a source which has nothing to do with the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony. These are described as persons who

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1. Ibid., p. 53.
2. Ibid.
3. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, pp. 203-4; Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, pp. 250-51.
4. *TB*, 1. 7. 3.
5. *MS*, IV. 9. 8.
6. *...yasya vā etānyojasvīni bhavanti tadrāṣṭramojasvi bhavati...yasya vā tāni tejasvīni bhavanti tedrāṣṭraṃ tejasvī bhavati.* Ibid.
7. *ŚB*, V. 3. 1. 12.

consecrate the king, and together sustain the kingship.[1] The functionaries, who are described as ratnins in the ceremony, also figure as important personages in another ritual of the *rājasūya* sacrifice, the passing round of the sacrificial sword which forms part of the game of dice. The *White Yajus* school mentions *sūta* and *grāmaṇī*, to whom the sword has to be passed round in order to make them ultimately subordinate to the king.[2] In this connection a text of the *Black Yajus* school states that the sword is passed on to the *purohita*, who hands it over to the ratnins. Finally it goes to the *akṣāvāpa*, who prepares the gaming ground with it.[3] Although only two ratnins are speci fically mentioned in this context, three others, namely the *saṃgrahītṛ*, the *bhāgadugha* and the *kṣattṛ*, are invited by the king, at the end of the ceremony of the game of dice, to act as witnesses.[4]

Survivals of old rituals are still to be found in Hindu society. On the occasion of the *upanayana* ceremony the boy has to visit the house of his family potter where he offers oblations to the wheel and also that of his family oilman whose pressing nill he has to worship. This practice is also followed by the girl on the occasion of her marriage. From this it would be too much to conclude that these artisans are responsible for the management of the client's family. But at the same time it is abundantly clear that the ritual concerns only those artisans with which the family members have dealings in their daily life, and surely in pre-industrial rural society no peasant family can carry on without the assistance of these artisans. Such an inference can reasonably be also drawn from similar rituals in Vedic times. Functional relations between the king and his employees and dependants were sanctified and ritualised by the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony. The ratnins whom the king visited certainly formed his household entourage and administrative machinery, between the two of which it is difficult to draw a line in later Vedic polity.

But it is difficult to speak in terms of the high constitutional position of the ratnins[5], for there was hardly anything

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1. *PB*, XIX. 1. 4.
2. *ŚB*, V. 4. 4. 15-19.
3. *Ap. ŚS*, XVIII. 18. 14-16.
4. Ibid., XVIII. 19- 6. These three functionaries are also mentioned by Bhaṭṭabhāskara Miśra in his comment on *TS*, 1. 8. 16.
5. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 255, fn.

like constitution as we use the term in modern times. Jayaswal describes the ratnins as high functionaries of the state,[1] which seems to be correct in so far as the object of the jewel-offering ceremony was to secure the support and allegiance of the ratnins to the king. We may add that the ritual also presupposed the support of the gods, to whom oblations were offered at the house of the ratnins. In the case of the *parivṛkti* the oblation was offered not to secure the support of the god but to ward off the evil associated with that queen and the god Niṛṛti. At any rate the negative importance of the discarded queen cannot be questioned. Perhaps it is not possible to push the distinction between the officers of higher grade and those of lower grade too far,[2] for in the texts the allegiance of every functionary is considered to be equally important for the king. Nevertheless, some sort of precedence is observed in the official hierarchy.

It seems that the ratnins, eleven of whom are common to all the lists and twelve to the majority of them, formed some sort of king's council. The number may have varied from state to state, for the *rājasūya* ceremony was practised in the kingdoms of the Bhāratas, the Kurus and the Pañcālas. The geographical horizon of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* suggests that it was also practised in Videha, where the number of the ratnins seems to have been twelve although the *parivṛkti* was not included in the list of regular ratnins. It is striking that the practice of having a council of twelve prevailed among several Indo-European peoples. According to Chadwick, there is some evidence for councils consisting of a fixed number of men, namely twelve, whose position may have differed somewhat from the ordinary members of the court. The Old Saxons had a council of twelve which met annually, but they had no king. Such a council of twelve existed in Sweden in traditional and historical times. Some Indo-European gods too were credited with possessing a council of twelve which performed judicial and sacrificial duties ; there is the legend of the twelve Frisian judges.[3] Councils of twelve are known to have existed among the Celts and other European peoples[4]. Excepting the Homeric people

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1. Op. cit., p. 203.
2. Cf. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 255, fn.
3. *The Heroic Age*, p. 370.
4. Ibid.

the council of twelve was an institution common to many Āryan peoples, and therefore Chadwick thinks that this type is of great antiquity.[1] Most probably before their separation the Āryans possessed such an institution, which they continued to retain even when they had settled down as independent peoples in Europe and India. In view of this supporting evidence from the institutions of the other Āryan peoples it is reasonable to suppose that the eleven, and in most cases twelve, ratnins of the later Vedic period may have functioned as a regular council for advising and helping the king, for the composition of the *sabhā* suggests that it was too big a body to be helpful in advising the king in conducting the day-to-day affairs of the state. "It might naturally be expected that the authority of the council would make itself felt most on the occasion of the king's death", on the succession of a new ruler to the throne.[2] It is this which explains the king's going to the ratnins' at the time of his accession to the throne.

But in those days it was difficult to distinguish between the members of the council on the one hand and the high functionaries or officers of the state on the other. Apparently the ratnins constituted a sort of bureaucracy, the most developed form of which is to be found in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. But there is no doubt that the number of officials known from the *ratnahavīṃṣi* indicates a far more developed administrative organization than what we find in earlier times. Although the *Ṛg Veda* does not know the ratnins as such, certain high personages such as *rājaṇya*, *purohita*, *seṇānī*, *sūta*, *grāmaṇī* are mentioned there. But in the later Vedic period we come across half a dozen new functionaries, some of whom seem to have been recruited from the pre-Āryans. The most significant from the administrative point of view seems to be the office of *bhāgadugha*, the officer-in-charge of taxes, which indicates that the taxation machinery was being consolidated from this time onwards. Although some officers of the state were concerned with religion, sports, cattle, which perhaps were the legacy of the tribal life, others performed functions which would be regarded as properly governmental. It can be said that the ratnins were "differentiated organs of

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 371.

government", not to be found in the early stage. It appears that the old tribal assemblies were found inadequate to deal with the problems which had cropped up on account of the expansion of the Āryans, with the result that the state was having more officials, as different from the people, to manage its own affairs.

The existence of numerous officials, some of non-Āryan origin, indicates that the state had ceased to be tribal and become predominantly territorial in character. Especially the office of the *bhāgadugha* presupposes the king's rule over a fixed territory from the inhabitants of which he collected taxes. The territorial character of the state can also be inferred from the use of the term *rāṣṭra* in the sense of kingdom at several places.[1] Each of the ratnins lived in his house, which is another indication of the well-established settlements in the state.

Whether the ratnins were elected is difficult to say. According to Jayaswal they were high functionaries of the state selected on the principle of class and caste representation.[2] How every caste sent and selected its representatives is not clear, but it cannot be denied that almost all the varṇas and important social groups were associated with the work of government. And in some cases even the representative character of the ratnin can be inferred. Thus the *vaiśya-grāmaṇī* represented the *viś* or the village, the headship of which he enjoyed. Possibly the headman may have been elected because of personal qualities and seniority in age, if we accept the analogy from primitive societies. Since the varṇas of several ratnins such as *kṣattṛ*, *saṃgrahītṛ*, *akṣāvāpa*, etc., cannot be determined with certainty, it is very difficult to find out the varṇa ratio among the ratnins. Some ratnins were undoubtedly of śūdra extraction or were condemned as such. But, as has been shown elsewhere, all the śūdra ratnins cannot be proved to have been non-Āryans,[3] and hence it is wrong to hold that the śūdra ratnins represented only the conquered helots, as has been done by Jayaswal.[4]

What is remarkable about the ratnin list is that the members of the weaker sex also found place here. In some lists two, and

1. *MS*, IV. 3. 8; *TB*, I. 7. 3.
2. *Hindu Polity*, p. 203.
3. *Śūdras*, p. 51.
4. *Hindu Polity*, p. 204.

in others three, ratnins happen to be women, the wives of the king. The fact that out of about a dozen ratnins associated with the state ceremony women occupy two or three places reminds us of the age of the *Ṛg Veda* when women took part in the deliberations of the *vidatha* and, to some extent, even in those of the *sabhā*. In post-Vedic times they gradually came to lose their importance, a process which had begun in the later Vedic period because of the practice of polygamy. The king had at least three wives in this period ; the *mahiṣī* enjoyed the highest legal status, the *vāvātā*'s position was based on favour and love shown to her, and the *parivṛkti* was practically discarded on account of her barrenness. The ritual shows that the legal status of the *mahiṣī* was not yet established on a firm footing, and that the other wives of the king could challenge her position, for the other two could not be ignored on this occasion of great political importance.

Our discussion would show that the *ratnahavīṃṣī* ritual was the product of a developed political, social, and economic organization in which tribal and matriarchal elements were being submerged by class, territorial, and patriarchal elements, leading to the establishment of differentiated organs of government in the later Vedic period. In spite of priestly support the new state was predominantly military in character, for as many as half a dozen functionaries were associated with military work.

Chapter XI

SOME TRIBAL AND PRIMITIVE ASPECTS OF THE LATER VEDIC POLITY

Our chief source for the study of the later Vedic polity is the coronation rituals, but the attempt to look for elements of contractual or constitutional monarchy in the Vedic period[1] has vitiated our understanding of the significance of several ceremonies in the *rājasūya* and *vājapeya* sacrifices. This, to some extent, has been counterbalanced by Ghoshal's study of these rituals.[2] A recent study of the *rājasūya* by Heesterman underestimates its social and political implications, which were brought to light by Weber and treated further by several Indian scholars.[3] Heesterman claims to have studied the problem against the Vedic view of the world, but his completely anthroplogical and idealistic approach makes him present an incomplete picture. In our opinion there is still scope for examination of these Vedic ceremonies in the light of comparative anthropology and parallel rituals prevalent among the other branches of the Indo-European peoples. The present study therefore will be confined to primitive and tribal aspects of the later Vedic polity as known from the rituals but will not completely ignore the new social factors. Excepting the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony, which presupposes a developed society based on differentiation of functions and settlement in a fixed territory, other rituals such as the *devasūhavīṃṣi* (offerings to gods acting as divine quickeners), sprinkling ceremony, the ceremony of vesting sovereignty, the mimic cow-raid, the chariot-race and the game of dice can be interpreted in this light.

In the *devasūhavīṃṣi* ceremony, according to all the texts, desire is expressed for different kinds of authority, two of which, namely *kṣatra* and *jānarājya*, are mentioned by all the authori-

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1. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, pp. 219-20.
2. *Historiography and other Essays*, Essay XIII.
3. J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, pp. 4-5 and fn. 2.

ties.[1] The first means chiefdom or simple authority over the people, but the second has variously been interpreted as man-rule, rule over the people, and national rule. Ghoshal thinks that it means rule over the whole folk as distinguished from rule over a single tribe.[2] But the use of the term *pañcajanāḥ* in the Vedic literature in the sense of five tribes is well known. Hence *jānarājya* probably means the desire for rule over the tribe to which the king belongs. We need not examine the terms indicating other forms of authority, for which desire is expressed in this ceremony, but it is significant that nowhere any desire is expressed for territorial sovereignty. The invocation formula describes the king as the son of such a man and the son of such a woman.[3] In one text, however, he appears only as the son of such a man.[4] Although the formula indicates the human origin of Vedic kingship, it also suggests matrilineal influences in Vedic society. Not only the name of the father is given, but the name of the mother also is mentioned. The formula therefore demonstrates that the mother is as important as the father. This ceremony is concluded by the priests by presenting the sacrificer to the assembled folk with the following words :

"This is your king, ye (people), Soma is the king of us Brāhmaṇas."

For the term people we have variants such as the Kurus, Pañcālas, Bharatas, etc.[5] This shows that the basis of the kingship is not fully territorial but tribal. Since the brāhmaṇas are excluded from the control of the king, it implies that although part of the tribe they are raised above the common people belonging to the tribe. Or it might suggest that since the brāhmaṇas do not belong to the original tribe they are exempted from the authority of the king; this might indicate the non-Āryan origin of the brāhmaṇas for which a case has been made by several scholars[6]. The theory that Soma is identical with the king and

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1. *VS*, IX. 40; *MS*, II. 6. 6; *TS*, I. 8. 10; *KS*, XV. 5.
2. Op. cit., p. 257.
3. *VS*, IX. 40; *MS*, II. 6. 6.
4. *TS*, I. 8. 10.
5. *VS*, IX. 40; *KS*, XV. 7; *MS*, II. 6. 9; cf. *TS*, I. 8. 10; *TB*, 1. 7. 4 uses the term Bharatas.
6. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 306 ff; Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 97-98.

consequently the crucial passage does not refer to the special position of the brāhmaṇas[1] has hardly any basis in fact, for several other passages indicate the privileged status of the brāhmaṇas. In view of the clear statement of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that the brāhmaṇa is not to be lived upon by the king[2] it would be wrong to think that the passage implies the glorification of the royal sacrificer and not the independence of the brāhmaṇa.[3]

An important ceremony in the *rājasūya* sacrifice is the *abhiṣecanīyam*, in which the king is sprinkled over by the representatives of the three upper classes and the *janya*, who is interpreted variously as a śūdra, a member of the hostile tribe, king's rival or a man of aristocratic birth or a foreign ally[4]. The origin of the practice of sprinkling seems to have been shrouded in mystery.[5] But it seems that this rite corresponds to that of purification prescribed in almost all important *saṃskāras* (rituals) laid down in the Gṛhyasūtras. We do not know how far this idea is connected with that of the renewal of life. At any rate, according to primitive methods of purification, the novices are washed in water or blood; they bathe in a stream or in the sea, or are scorched in front of fire.[6]

The sprinkling ceremony is followed by the investiture ritual, in which the priest invests the prince with a strong bow with three arrows and the prince is asked to protect the people.[7] The bow is described as the noble man's strength, and in the opinion of a Brāhmaṇa the weapon is handed to the king in order to endow him with strength and consequently make him fit for consecration.[8] This ritual may have been derived from the hunting ceremony practised among primitive tribes at the time of the initiation of a person into manhood when he uses

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1. Heesterman, op. cit., pp. 75-77.
2. V. 3. 3. 12.
3. Heesterman, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
4. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polty*, p. 208; Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 267.
5. Bandyopadhaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, p. 174.
6. George Thomson, *AA*, p. 99.
7. *VS*, X. 8-9; *ŚB*, V. 3. 5. 27-30.
8. *ŚB*, V. 3. 5. 30.

the bow. It appears that the bow, the symbol of sustenance for the primitive man, becomes the symbol of power and protection for the sacrificer who is initiated into kingship.

Next the king is announced to the deities and then to the people by name, parentage and tribe.[1] The fact that the king is announced by his tribe is explained by Kātyāyana as indicating the tribal basis of the later Vedic kingship. In the opinion of this commentator the king was the "king of the people as the territory was not fixed but fluctuating."[2] This is also evident from the fact that the proclamation was made : "Oh people, this is your king."[3] All these references indicate the tribal character of the Vedic state. However there is a passage in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* in which, the king is announced "in this tribe (*viś*), in this kingdom (*rāṣṭra*)."[4] This might imply that the tribe and the state were now considered identical. Although the state was regarded territorial in nature, its tribal character still persisted inasmuch as the ruling class belonged to the same tribe. Significantly enough the compilers of the later Vedic texts were conscious of the gradual transformation of the Vedic state from the tribal to the territorial stage. This can be inferred from a passage, which states that by partial performance of a ritual the king attains the people (*viś*), but not the kingdom; on the other hand he attains both by its full performance.[5] But the following ceremony, in which the king mounts the four quarters and the zenith, symbolises his sovereignty over those regions.[6] It implies the conception of territorial sovereignty. This sovereignty was further accompanied by the assertion of royal authority over people of different social classes, for in the accompanying formula brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, and some others whose identity it is difficult to establish, are invoked to extend their protection to the sacrificer.[7] This

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1. *TS*, I. 8. 12; *KS*, XV. 7; *MS*, II. 6. 9; *TB*, I. 7- 7; *KŚS*, XV. 94-96.
2. *yasyāśca jāte rājā bhavati, deśasyānavasthitatvāt. KŚS*, XV. 96-97.
3. *ŚB*, V. 3. 3. 12. Here the name of the people, *viz*. Kurus, Pañcāla*s* and Bharatas, is inserted in other texts such as *Āp. ŚS*, XVIII. 12. 7.
4. I. 8. 12.
5. *...ubhe eva viśaṃ ca rāṣṭraṃ cā'vagacchati. TS*, II. 3. 1.
6. *VS*, X. 10-14; *TS*, I. 8. 13; *KS*, XV. 7; *MS*, II. 6. 10.
7. Ibid.

ceremony clearly indicates the political influence of the three higher classes, whose emergence tended to strongly undermine the tribal character of the state in later Vedic times.

The *rājasūya* sacrifice provides a curious ceremony in which the priest silently strikes the king with sticks on the back.[1] Some regard it as the height of priestly authority.[2] others think that by this the king is brought under the laws;[3] still others hold that the ceremony signifies the king's purification or acquisition of special privileges,[4] such as royal immunity from punishment. There is support for the last view in some texts. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* makes it clear that through this process the king is made exempt from judicial punishment.[5] Another later text states that thereby the king' is purified of his sin and carried beyond death.[6] The ritual can be better understood if we take into account the practices prevalent among primitive peoples. The savage Timmes of Sierraleone, who elect their king, reserve to themselves the right of beating him on the eve of his coronation; and they avail themselves of this constitutional privilege with such hearty goodwill that sometimes the unhappy monarch does not long survive his elevation to the throne.[7] It seems that the practice was meant to test the endurance of the king. We may also refer to an analogous rite among the Spartans. As Nilson points out, the flagellation of the Spartan boys "was once a rite in which the boys were struck with the sacred bough, which conferred strength and good luck."[8] In other words it seems to have been a rite of initiation. Thus originally the ceremony of beating was either a rite of initiation or a test to find out the power of endurance in the tribal chief. In later times the priests in theory seized this ritual to assert their power over the king but in practice it came to be interpreted as the king's exemption from the operation of law.

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1. *SB*, V. 4. 4. 7.
2. Weber, *Uber den Rājasūya*, p. 63 quoted in Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 2, fn. 37.
3 Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 217.
4. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 269.
5. V. 4. 4. 7.
6. *KŚS*, XV. 191-92.
7. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 176.
8. Quoted in Thomson, *AA*, p. 437.

The tribal and primitive character of the rituals is more in evidence in the ceremonies of cow-raid, game of dice and chariot-race. These seem to have been originally prescribed as ordeals for establishing the qualifications of the sacrificer for kingship. In the ceremony of cow-raid the king is allowed to take away a herd of kine from the house of a friend. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that the sacrificer takes more than a hundred cows from his relative, using his chariot for the purpose and "conquering by the impulse of Maruts."[1] It comments that the Maruts are the clansmen, and it is by his clan that the chieftain wins what he desires to win.[2] According to the same source the king presents to his relatives just as many cows as he takes from them or more;[3] the sacrificer returns the cows because he is not capable of a cruel deed.[4] The ritual of the *Black Yajus* recommends a sham fight, in which the king discharges the arrows at a rājanya posted with bow in hand and thus overpowers him.[5] The whole ceremony therefore means defeating the relative in the cow-raid and then reinstating the vanquished in his position by doing him an act of grace. The ceremony of cow-raid reminds us of an old test prevalent among the tribal people. Primarily this must have meant the ability to capture cows from the enemies, of which we have many instances in the Vedic period, the very term *gaviṣṭi* having the secondary meaning of war. In the present ritual, however, cows are not taken from the inimical tribes but from the relatives, the idea being to assert the royal power over the rival from the same tribe. Evidently it is a mimic cow-raid, for the contestant is deliberately made to win. But there is no doubt that originally the king's success in the cow-raid exhibited in him those qualifications which distinguished the early chiefs in the cattle forays.

Another such rite prescribed in the *rājasūya* ceremony is the game of dice. According to this a cow is staked on the gaming ground by a tribesman of the king, who wins the state from him.[6] It is suggested that this symbolises the assertion of the

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1. V. 4. 3. 1.-8.
2. V. 4. 3. 8.
3. V. 4. 3. 12.
4. Ibid.
5. *SBE*, xli, 100. fn. 1.
6. Heesterman (op. cit., p. 156) thinks that the real stake of the game is the king himself, although the ritual leaves no doubt that the real stake is the cow.

royal sacrificer's rule over the common freeman.[1] But most probably the game of dice was intended to test the sagacity of the chief at the time of election, which was confined at an earlier stage only to the members of the tribe for the king's competitor in this game is described as his *sajāta*.[2] Actually this might refer to the state of affairs existing in the earlier period. But although kingship had become hereditary now, the farce of election continued in the coronation ceremony.

But, of such ordeals as imply the election of the king at some early stage, the chariot-race occupies an important place. It forms a part of the *vājapeya* sacrifice, by performing which a brāhmaṇa becomes the chief priest and a kṣatriya attains universal sovereignty. In the race the royal sacrificer enters into competition with sixteen other competitors, the total number of the chariots being seventeen.[3] The chariots start with the beating of drums and raising of war cries. In the course of this ritual a rājanya shoots an arrow for fixing the goal of the race. Commenting on this the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that the rājanya is "most manifestly of Prajāpati"; hence while being one he rules over many.[4] This may rightly be taken as an early statement of the doctrine of the divinity of the king, which is not generally supported by any other Vedic texts.

Heesterman thinks that chariot-races and other games were intended to serve the function of regenerating the productive forces in the cosmos, of renewing the world.[5] Although the passages quoted by him nowhere mention this purpose of the chariot-race, the general theory that most rituals in primitive society were saturated with the ideas of rebirth can apply also to the chariot-race. But we are apt to miss the real significance of this ritual if we are to look at it only from that point of view. The chariot-race, although the product of a developed social stage, seems to have been an older test for proving the king's superiority in valour and physical powers; it was intended to detect the military qualities of the king or the chief of the tribe. The victory cries raised in connection with this rite make it clear

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1. Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, p. 272.
2. *VS*, X. 29; *ŚB*, V. 4. 4. 19-23; *KŚS*, XV 197-205.
3. *ŚB*, V 1. 5. 6-10.
4. *ŚB*, V. 1. 5. 13-14.
5. *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 133.

that it was the reflection of the actual practice in military campaigns.[1] Remarkably enough chariot-race as a rite prevailed not only among several primitive peoples but also in pre-historic Greece. In that country initiation into kingship was effected by a competitive ordeal, which was originally a foot-race and later became a chariot-race. In this race the winner was acclaimed as the god king of the year.[2] According to tradition the earliest games at Olympia were held by Endymion, who set his sons to run a race for the kingdom.[3] Influences of this tradition continued to persist in later times. Even in historical times the Olympian victor was regarded with superstitious veneration and invested with honours that might be described as royal or divine. At Olympia he was crowned with olive. On his return to his native city he was dressed in purple and drawn by white horses in a triumphal procession passing through a breach in the walls.[4] Probably the ceremony of chariot-race was inherited by the Vedic Āryans from the original stock of the Indo-Europeans, who used this method in the selection of their chief. In India also the race was undoubtedly used for this purpose, for at the very beginning of the *vājapeya* sacrifice it is stated that the kingdom belongs to him who wins the race.[5] But later it became a mock race in which the form continued but the substance had departed; for the king was deliberately made to win this race.

The concluding portion of the *vājapeya* sacrifice also points to the tribal aspects of the Vedic polity. After the king has ascended the throne he is addressed thus: "Thee for tilling! Thee for peaceful dwelling! —Thee for wealth! —Thee for thrift!"[6] This according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* implies that the king is placed on the throne for the welfare of the people.[7] In other words the supreme power was vested in one man; the purpose of the gift was promotion of agriculture and well-being of the people. It may be noted that the tribal chief of an agri-

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1. Heesterman, op. cit., p. 137.
2. Thomson, *AA*, p. 118.
3. Fraser, *The Golden Bough*, p. 156.
4. Thomson, *AA*, p. 118.
5. *ajimeva asmin ajāmahai. sa yo na ujjeṣyati tasya na idaṃ bhaviṣyatīti ŚB*, V. 1. 1. 3.
6. *ŚB*, V. 2. 1. 25.
7. Ibid.

cultural society was meant for performing similar duties. Agricultural society, due to slow, arduous and uncertain nature of agricultural processes, is characterized by the extensive development of magic. Out of such a society eventually there emerges the god-king with the special function of promoting by mimetic magic the annual sequence from seed-time to harvest.[1] This may not have been the case in Vedic India where the king had not yet acquired the status of God, but at any rate we notice striking similarity in respect of the ruler's obligations, which were not confined to the maintenance of law and order.

The formula addressed on the occasion of the *vājapeya* sacrifice to the king reminds us of the coronation oath in the *aindra mahābhiṣeka* ceremony. Herein the king and the priest pledge mutually to each other to observe a certain code of conduct. The king repeats the following oath which is administered to him by the priest :

"From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice, my gifts, my place, my good deeds, my life, and mine offspring mayest thou take, if I play thee false."[2]

Jayaswal rightly points out that the oath is contractual in nature,[3] there is nothing to show that the pledge was given to the people as a whole. Jayaswal thinks that the oath was made to the officiating priest, who represented the whole community.[4] But by no stretch of imagination a member of one social class, however, pre-eminent, can be taken as representing the interests of all the other social classes. In the beginning the oath may have been made by the chief in relation to the whole tribe. We have examples of such oaths in primitive societies. The Mexican kings, when they mounted the throne, swore that they would make the sun shine, the clouds give rain, the river flow, and the earth bring forth fruits in abundance.[5] Although the present oath is dissimilar, it may have been administered by the tribe to the chief. But as the tribe disintegrated

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1. Thomson, *AA*, p. 22.
2. *AB*, VIII. 15 (Keith's tr.).
3. Op. cit., p. 210.
4. Ibid., p. 211.
5. Frazer, op. cit., p. 87.

into classes and the priests emerged as important a class as the warriors themselves, the king transferred his pledge to the priests to whose ideological support he owed his power.

The rituals shed some light on the nature of the office of the king. Here the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* furnishes contradictory evidence. According to one school if enjoyment of the kingdom rule is desired for the lifetime of the king-elect only the first syllable *bhūḥ* is to be pronounced, if for two generations *bhūr bhuvaḥ*, if for three generations *bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ*, namely, the complete formula was to be repeated.[1] In the same source there also occurs the phrase *rājānaṃ rājapitaram*,[2] which indicates hereditary kingship for two generations. Thus according to this Brāhmaṇa the maximum period up to which a dynasty could rule was of three generations. But the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions dynasties of kings who ruled successively for ten generations. The two sets of evidence can be reconciled only by presuming that in the beginning the tenure lasted only for a limited period, and then in course of time it became hereditary. Limited tenure is suppored by the practice among primitive and ancient tribes. Among several tribes the tenure of the ruler lasts for a year, and when it expires the king or the chief is re-crowned. An historical instance can be found in the case of Babylon, whose kings used to take the hand of Marduk annually[3]. But the tenure lasted for a longer period in Greece where at the end of every eight years the king's sacred powers needed to be renewed by intercourse with the godhead, without which he would have forfeited the right to the throne.[4] What was obviously a ritual in later times may have been a reality in earlier days. This might be also true of the formulas quoted from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

A general review of the coronation rituals suggests that coronation was essentially a form of initiation, a more imposing version of the initiation of the primitive man into manhood or chieftainship. The rituals repeatedly advance the idea of rebirth, which shows that with the king's accession

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1. *AB*, VIII. 7; according to Weber (*Ind. Stud.*, ix, 335) this passage refers to the sacrificer, his son and grandson.
2. Ibid., VIII. 12.
3. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 281.
4. Ibid., pp. 279-80.

to the throne began a new phase of his life, implying a complete break with his past. Further, the ordeals prescribed on the occasion of coronation are similar to those prescribed for testing the physical power of the tribal man and the chief at the time of initiation. As we know, in the selection of a man for succession to the throne in early society physical strength and beauty held a prominent place.[1] Some ordeals such as the chariot-race seem to have been common to other branches of the Āryans, who first used horses for yoking to the chariots and not for riding. But the ordeals of cow-raid and the game of dice seem to be of Indian origin. In any case these ordeals cannot be taken as indicating the primitive character of kingship in the later Vedic period when they were retained only as a matter of form. But they leave no doubt that the king was elected in the earlier period.

Since in some ordeals the competitors of the king were of equal birth (*sajāta*) we may reasonably conjecture that originally the king was elected by the members of his own tribe. Further evidence of the tribal character of kingship is to be found in the fact that the king is mentioned by the *viś* and is formally announced to the *viś*. But it seems that by the later Vedic period the tribal character of kingship had considerably corroded. Several rites imply the territorial jurisdiction of the king, while two rites explicitly refer to this aspect of the later Vedic kingship. The great solvent of the old tribal order was the rise of social classes based on the differentiation of functions. Thus in several ceremonies the participants are not described as the representatives of the tribe, but as brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and in some cases even śūdras. Finally, the names of officials mentioned in the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony indicate that the old tribal equality was being shattered not only by the elevation of some members of the tribe to higher position over the others but also by the recruitment of the aboriginals into the ranks of the Āryans. Hence there does not seem to be much support for the view that monarchy was generally tribal in the later Vedic period.[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 156.
2. Cf. Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, p. 289.

CHAPTER XII

VARNA IN RELATION TO LAW AND POLITICS

(*c.* 600 B.C.—A.D. 500)

The character of the post-Vedic polity cannot be fully comprehended without a consideration of the relation between the varṇa system on the one hand and law and politics on the other. There are good reasons to think that from the 5th century B.C. caste not only played a vital part in the rise of the state power, but also largely conditioned its growth at various stages as well as shaped its organs and moulded its laws.

The Purāṇic speculation establishes causal connection between the rise of varṇas and the origin of the state.[1] It is stated in half a dozen Pūrāṇas that, although the duties of different varṇas were settled, they did not perform their respective functions and came into mutual conflict. In order to put an end to this state of affairs Brahmā prescribed coercion (*daṇḍa*) and war (*yuddha*) as the profession of the kṣatriyas.[2] Such speculations may have been made in the Gupta period when the Purāṇas and the didactic portions of the *Mahābhārata* were put into their final shape. But these ideas could not possibly have occurred to the thinkers unless there was a basis for them in age-old traditions, or unless such a process went on in some of the contemporary tribes breaking into classes. Further, in all the brāhmaṇical works from the Dharmasūtras and the *Arthaśāstra* onwards, the most emphasised function of the head of the state is the maintenance of the social order based on the varṇas.[3] According to Kauṭilya the king, as the promulgator of *dharma*, is there to protect the fourfold caste system.[4] The *Śānti Parva* clearly states that the duties pertaining to one's caste or social class (*jātidharma* and *varṇadharma*) rest upon the state power (*kṣātradharma*).[5] Manu declares that the kingdom can prosper only so long as the purity of castes

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1. Supra, pp. 53-54.
2. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, i, VIII. 160.
3. Cf. supra, pp. 61-62.
4. *AŚ*, III. 1.
5. 64. 1-2; cf. 24-25 and 65. 5-6.

is maintained. If the bastard people of the mixed castes sully it, the state will perish together with its inhabitants.[1] In fact Manu can hardly think of the royal functions without being connected with the caste system in one way or the other. As Hopkins puts it : "Incidental mention of the king standing without particular relation to the other castes can only be sparingly quoted."[2] According to brāhmaṇical authorities if anybody deflects from his caste duties, it is nothing short of a calamity. As Nārada, a lawgiver of about the fifth century A.D., states : "If the king does not dictate punishments to any caste, when they have left the path, the created beings of the world would perish."[3] The *Śānti Parva* identifies the institution of kingship with the preservation of the varṇa system. It prescribes the same punishment for rebellion against the king as for causing confusion in the social orders.[4] So far as the support of the class system by the state is concerned there is broad agreement between the views of the ancient Indian thinkers and those of Plato and Aristotle,[5] although class was considered not so rigid in Greece as varṇa in India.

The Dharmaśāstra insistence on royal responsibility to uphold the varṇa system is corroborated by epigraphic evidence, which, although conventional in some cases, throws light on the actual position. Asoka's officers are appointed to work among the warriors (*bhaṭamayeṣu*), brāhmaṇas and the ibhyas (*i.e.* vaiśyas).[6] It seems that the term *dāsabhataka* in Aśokan inscriptions[7] stands for the śūdras. Thus, broadly speaking, Aśoka took the existing social order for granted and appointed his officers to work amongst the four social classes. Proceeding further, the Nasik Cave Inscription of the brāhmaṇa Sātavāhana ruler Vāsiṣṭhiputra Puḷumāvi (middle of the second century A.D.) informs us that the king, who was hostile to the kṣatriyas,

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1. *yatratveteparidhvaṃsājjāyante varṇadūṣakāḥ rāṣṭrikaiḥ sahatadrāṣṭraṃ kṣiprameva vinaśyati. Manu*, X. 61; cf. VII. 35, VIII. 41.
2. *Mutual Relation of Four Castes in Manu*, pp 75-76.
3. *Nārada Smṛti*, XVIII. 14.
4. *rājño vadhaṃcikīrṣedyastasya citro vadho bhavet, ājīvakasya stenasya varṇasaṃkarasya ca.* 86. 21.
5. *Republic*, iii, 434; *Politics*, pp. 274-75.
6. R. E. V. For the term *bhaṭamaya* the interpretation of Sénart seems to be correct.
7. R. E. IX. XI, XIII and P. E. VII.

was a preventor of confusion in the fourfold caste system.[1] The near contemporary Śaka ruler Rudradāman, although of foreign extraction, is described as being approached (or elected ?) by the varṇas.[2] An inscription, of A.D. 529, of king Samkṣobha of the Parivrājaka family describes him as devoted to the establishment of the *varṇāśrama dharma*.[3] Again, the Mandasore Stone Inscription, of A.D. 532, of Yaśodharman mentions one of his predecessors Abhayadatta as acting to the advantage of those who belonged to the four castes.[4] It is claimed therein that Dharmadoṣa made the kingdom free from intermixture of all the castes.[5] Reference may also be made to the Banskhera Inscription of Harṣa, in which his father Prabhākaravardhana is described as a regulator of the system of orders and stages.[6] Thus as regards the Guptas and their successors, epigraphs refer to some of the most distinguished rulers of the age as "employed in settling the system of castes and orders" and "in keeping the castes confined to their respective sphere of duty."[7] The inscriptional evidence[8] shows that not only in theory but in practice also the preservation of the varṇa-divided society was the main function of the state.

As to the caste of the king himself, he was to be a kṣatriya. In the early literature the terms rājanya and kṣatriya are synonymous. But there are instances of the members of other castes also becoming kings. The Jātakas furnish at least four examples of brāhmaṇa kings.[9] Later, in post-Maurya and Gupta periods, we find the famous examples of the Andhras, Śuṅgas, Kāṇvas, Vākāṭakas, Gaṅgas and Kadambas founding ruling dynasties. Some of these may have been of brāhmaṇa origin; others, especially in the Deccan and South, may have been local dynasties elevated to the rank of the highest social class. At any rate the emergence of brāhmaṇa ruling houses is a new development, for which there seems to be hardly any parallel in earlier times.

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1. *khatiya-dapa-māna-madanasa vinivatita-cātuvaṇa-saṇkarasa*. *Sel. Inscr.*, II, no. 86, l. 6.
2. *Sel. Inscr.*, II, no. 67, l. 9.
3. *varṇāśrama-dharma-sthāpanā-niratena*. Ibid., p. 375,. l. 10.
4. *CII*, iii, no. 35, ll. 15-17.
5. Ibid., ll. 18-19
6. *EI*, iv, 29. l. 3.
7. H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Advanced History of India*, p. 195.
8. Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 500.
9. R. N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 104.

It is not found necessary to confer the status of kṣatriya on these rulers. This is, however, needed in the case of those who originally belonged to the śūdra caste. The Purāṇic prophesy that most of the kings in the Kali age would be śūdras[1] probably refers either to the Buddhist and heretic rulers or to such rulers of foreign stock as failed to conform strictly to the brāhmaṇical pattern of life. Perhaps the line of demarcation between the foreigners and śūdras was as thin as between slaves and barbarians in ancient Greece.[2] According to Manu and Viṣṇu a *snātaka* (one who has finished the period of his studentship) should not stay in the land of a śūdra ruler, which obviously admits the possibility of the existence of a śūdra ruler.[3] But there are two things to be borne in mind. First, historically there are very few examples of śūdra rulers. Second, whatever disputed examples there are they show that after accession to the throne the rulers did not continue to behave or to be treated as śūdras. For example, Candragupta Maurya, who, according to the Jain tradition, was the son of a peacock tamer, came to be glorified in mediaeval inscriptions as a descendant of the solar race.[4] Gupta kings, whose title according to the Dharmaśāstra regulations should make them vaiśyas, came to be connected by marriage alliance with the kṣatriya Licchavis and the brāhmaṇa Vākāṭakas, and in a Javanese text, came to be described as belonging to the kṣatriya race.[5] It has been suggested that Harṣavardhana was a vaiśya, but Hüan Tsang informs us that he was a Rājput, and Bāṇa states that he was a kṣatriya. All this demonstrates a tendency on the part of the brāhmaṇical society to absorb rulers of lower castes into the kṣatriya fold. If we take caste statistics of small and big rulers in the period under review, most of them will be found to be kṣatriyas and many of them brāhmaṇas. There does not seem to be much validity in the view that orthodox opinion was more outraged by brāhmaṇa kingship than by vaiśya or śūdra sovereignty.[6]

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1. *rājānaḥ śūdrabhūyiṣṭhāḥ. Vāyu P.*, ii, 58. 40; *Kūrma P.*, Ch. 30, p. 303.
2. Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 27, 36.
3. *Manu*, IV. 61; *Viṣṇu*, LXXI. 64.
4. The different views regarding the caste of the Mauryas have been summarised in an article by K. C. Ojha "Original Home and the Family of the Mauryas" in *Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute*, Vol. ix, 1951.
5. H. C. Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 5 edn., p. 258.
6. Rangaswami Aiyanagar, *Rājadharma*, p. 213.

From post-Maurya times onwards the way for the exaltation of the rich foreign rulers or the wealthy members of the lower castes to higher social status may easily have been paved by the importance of wealth existing in the consciousness of the people. It was stated in the *Pañcatantra* that it is wealth which makes a person powerful or learned.[1] In other words wealthy people might be considered as good as kṣatriyas and brāhmaṇas. If enterprising individuals from the lower classes rose to the throne either on a wave of reaction against the ruling class, or on account of their growing wealth, the brāhmaṇical ideologues were prudent enough to assimilate them to the kṣatriya caste by recasting the old genealogical legends and thus causing the least dislocation in the existing social system. This process is going on even in recent times.[2] Much has been made of the Roman virtue of maintaining the basic social structure by admitting into the fold of the ruling class the leading members from the unprivileged classes and keeping out the rest. This virtue, it would seem, was cultivated in no small measure by the ruling class of ancient India.

Next to the heads of the state its most important organ was the army. The right to bear arms—to exercise coercive power based on *daṇḍa*—was an exclusive privilege of the kṣatriyas. According to Manu, in times of emergency this right could be extended to the brāhmaṇas and the vaiśyas but never to the śūdras.[3] In view of the disabilities imposed upon the vaiśyas, and particularly the sūdras, there was a legitimate apprehension that the latter might turn their arms against the state which upheld the privileges of the upper classes. Kauṭilya alone holds that the army made up of vaiśyas and śūdras is important on account of their numerical strength. He seems to hold a low opinion of the army of brāhmaṇas, who, to his mind, can be won over by persuasions.[4] While defining the army as an indispensable element of the state, Kauṭilya expressly declares that the best army is purely composed of the soldiers of the kṣatriya caste.[5]

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1. *arthena balavān sarvo' pyarthādbhavati paṇḍitaḥ. yasyārthāḥ sa pumāṃlloke yasyārthāḥ sa hi paṇḍitaḥ*, *Pañcatantra*, II. 30-31.
2. D. D. Kosambi, "Ancient Kosala and Magadha", *JBBRAS*, xxvii (1952), 184.
3. *Manu*, VIII. 348.
4. *bahulasāraṃ vā vaiśyaśūdrabalamiti*, *AŚ*, IX. 2.
5. Ibid., VI. 1.

This is corroborated by Megasthenes, who refers to the fighting men (in our opinion corresponding to kṣatriyas) as forming the fifth class of the Indian population, maintained at the expense of the state and leading a life of ease in times of peace.[1] The *Kāmandakanītisāra*, which draws heavily upon Kauṭilya, states that the ksatriyas make the most excellent material for the army.[2] All this may indicate that at least in the Maurya period the kṣatriyas generally constituted the standing army paid by the state. Kauṭilya states that even vaiśyas and śūdras could be considered for enlistment, but Megasthenes does not agree with him. Megasthenes clearly notes that the husbandmen (obviously the vaiśyas and śūdras of Kauṭilya, agriculture being their common occupation)[3] are exempted from military service and the soldiers are meant to protect them.[4] This means that in face of foreign attacks and internal oppression the vaiśyas and śūdras were completely disarmed, so that even the wild beasts and fowls damaging their crops were to be scared away by a special class of hunters and not by them.[5]

The key post in the army was that of the *senāpati* (commander), whose appointment by later authorities is confined either to the brāhmaṇa or the kṣatriya caste.[6] Kāmandaka states that the priest, ministers and nobles are the principal leaders of the army.[7] As will be shown later, the ministers were either brāhmaṇas or kṣatriyas. The early Buddhist and Jain texts inform us that, besides the kṣatriyas, the brāhmaṇas also filled the office of the *senāpati* and *yodhājīvas* (warriors).[8]

The organization of bureaucracy, which was an important instrument of the state apparatus and which was covered by the term *amātya* in the *saptāṅga* theory of the state, seems to have been also based on caste. In the Jātakas the *amātyas* play a vital role as companions, councillors, and generals of the king.[9]

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1. Megasthenes, XXXIII, J. W. McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 85.
2. IV. 65-67.
3. R. S. Sharma, *Some Economic Aspects of the Caste System in Ancient India*, p. 14.
4. Megasthenes, XXXIII, McCrindle, op. cit., p 43-44
5. Ibid.
6. *senāpatiḥ kāryo brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyo' thavā. Agni Purāṇa* (BI), 220, 1.
7. *KNS*, XV, 20.
8. B. C. Law, *India as Described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, p. 155.
9. R. N. Mehta, op. cit., p. 136.

The repeated mention of the term *amaccakulam* (family of ministers) precludes the possibility of lower class people becoming ministers.[1] Fick states that these ministers like the khattiyas were characterised by "a specially developed class consciousness."[2] He, however, does not clarify their caste.[3] But an examination of references to *amaccas* would suggest that they were occasionally brāhmaṇas and frequently kṣatriyas.[4] There is no case of *gahapati* (householder) or artisans acting as the minister of the king. It appears that even during the pre-Maurya period the elasticity of the caste system was not so great as to permit the members of the lower classes to rise to high posts. The Dharmasūtras hardly give any idea of the caste of the *amātyas*, although Āpastamba states that men of the first three castes should be appointed to protect the people in towns and villages.[5] In the chapter on *amātyotpattiḥ* Kauṭilya does not clearly indicate the caste of the *amātyas*, but a close study of their qualifications may give some idea about this. An obvious item common to the list of requisites laid down by Kauṭilya and other thinkers whom he quotes is noble birth. This is expressed variously as "father and grand-father being amātyas", "*abhijana*" and "*jānapado'bhijātaḥ.*"[6] It is doubtful whether the qualification of noble birth could be found in anybody else than the members of the upper two varṇas.[7] As Aristotle puts it, good birth is nothing but ancient wealth and virtue,[8]—an attribute which can hardly be expected of the lower classes. Again, the enumeration of other qualifications constituting the *amātyasampat* leaves little doubt that the minister was to belong to the higher classes.[9] That the avenues to the higher positions were closed to members of lower castes is borne out by the statement of Megasthenes. He mentions the professional class of the councillors and assessors, who monopolise the highest posts of government, executive and judicial.[10] On his basis a later authority states that the noblest and richest take part in the direction of state affairs, administer justice, and sit in council with the kings.[11] That theirs was an exclusive caste is obvious

1. Ibid.
2. Fick, *The Social Organization of N. E. India etc.*, p. 143.
3. Ibid., p. 143. 4. Ibid., p. 144; R. N. Mehta, op. cit., p. 136.
5. II. 10.26. 4. 6. *AŚ*, I. 8-9.
7. *AŚ*, I. 9. 8. Aristotle, op. cit., p. 163. 9. *AŚ*, I. 9.
10. Megasthenes, XXXIII, J. W. McCrindle, op. cit., p. 85.
11. Arrian, LVI, Ibid., p. 138.

from the rules that its members could not marry outside their own caste, exchange one profession or trade for another, or follow more than one business.[1]

The same position seems to have continued in the Gupta period, of which evidence can be found in the contemporary law-books and inscriptions. Kātyāyana insists that the *amātya* should belong to the brāhmaṇa caste.[2] An actual example of this can be found in the Udayagiri Cave Inscription of Candra Gupta II, which speaks of a brāhmaṇa minister holding his position acquired by hereditary descent.[3]

Since Hopkins drew attention to the mention in the *Mahābhārata* of twenty-one rich vaiśya *amātyas* out of a total council of thirty-seven, too much notice has been taken of this fact.[4] It may be noted that the passage in question does not find place in the critical edition of the *Śānti Parva*. The latter, however, does refer to the composition of the body of eight *mantrins*, of whom four should be brāhmaṇas, three loyal, disciplined and obedient śūdras, and one a *sūta*.[5] The appointment of three obedient śūdras as *mantrins* can be regarded as an ideal worth trying and is in keeping with the liberal attitude of the *Śānti Parva* towards the śūdras in other matters. But the very term *mantrin* means the possessor of a magic formula, which implies a brāhmaṇa.[6]

In the case of ambassador (*dūta*), whose post was of considerable importance because of ally being an organ of the state, it was laid down that the candidate should belong to the aristocratic family (*kulīnaḥ*) and should be devoted to the duties of a kṣatriya (*kṣātradharmarataḥ*).[7] Speaking of the epic ambassador, Hopkins says that "he may be either a priest or an officer of military caste."[8] From the early Buddhist and Jain sources we know that members of the Śrotriya class of brāhmaṇas were occasionally employed as *dūtas*.[9]

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1. Megasthenes, XXXIII, Ibid., pp. 85-86.
2. Verse 11.
3. *CII*, iii, No. 6, ll. 3-4.
4. Hopkins, "Position of the Ruling Class in the Epic," *JAOS*, xiii (1889), 95; K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 319.
5. *ŚP*, 85, 7-10.
6. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxii, 47.
7. *ŚP*, 86, 26-27; *Manu*, VII. 63 ff.
8. Op. cit., p. 163.
9. B. C. Law, op. cit., p. 155.

In the Gupta period some important posts were probably filled by vaiśyas. A Gupta inscription of A.D. 493-4 refers to an initiated householder named Śarvadatta, who acted as an *uparika* (provincial governor) and a *dūtaka* (executor of grants).[1] Since this officer is described as the master of masons (*sthapati-samrāṭ*)[2] perhaps he was a vaiśya or a śūdra.

The influence of caste is to be also seen in some of the collective institutions such as the *pariṣad*, *paura* and *jānapada*. The post-Vedic *pariṣad* was an important committee which decided not only disputed points of law but also tendered advice to the king. It was undoubtedly an influential body of brāhmaṇas.[3] Thus in his comment to Gautama's passage, providing for the composition of the *pariṣad*, Maskarin holds that only the brāhmaṇas have the right to expound the law, and quotes Vasiṣṭha in his support.[4] Baudhāyana makes it clear that the ten members of this body should be *vipras*.[5] Elsewhere the details of qualifications laid down for the membership of the *pariṣad* lead us to the conclusion that it was almost entirely confined to the priests.

We have no definite information about the caste composition of the Jātaka *parisā*. But there is a suggestion that it consisted of ministers, *uparājan* (deputy king), *senāpati* (commander), *seṭṭhi* (head merchant)[6] and the *purohita* (chief priest). The *mantriparişad* of Kauṭilya, generally regarded as an inner cabinet, consisted of the *mantrins* recruited out of the *amātyas*, whose varṇa character has been discussed earlier. The Aśokan inscriptions do not give any indication about the structure of the *parisā*. We may reasonably conjecture that under the influence of Buddhist ideology it might have been closed to the brāhmaṇical priests. But, as would appear from Manu and Yājñavalkya, in the post-Maurya period the *pariṣad* was entirely manned by brāhmaṇas.[7]

It is difficult to reach any precise conclusion about the caste composition of the *paura* and *jānapada*, the existence of which itself

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1. *CII*, iii, no. 26, ll. 23-24. 2. Ibid.
3. Hopkins, op. cit., p. 148, footnote; *HCIP*, i, *The Vedic Age*, pp. 484-85.
4. *brāhmaṇa eva dharmapravacane teṣāmevādhikārāt*. *Gautama*. XXVIII. 50-51 ; cf. *Vas. Dh. S.*, III. 20.
5. *Baudh.*, I. 1. 8. 6. R. N. Mehta, op. cit., p. 135.
7. *Manu*, XII. 110-4; *Yāj.*, 1. 9.

is a matter of controversy.[1] There seems to be no basis for the theory that there was a central assembly of the *paura-jānapada*, but Jayaswal's arguments in favour of the prevalence of the separate bodies of *paura* and *jānapada* cannot be entirely ignored. Generally the term *paura* means an inhabitant of the city, and the term *jānapada* an inhabitant of the countryside. Assuming that in some cases the *paura* and *jānapada* were corporate bodies consulted by the king, our problem is to determine their caste representation. On the basis of a passage from the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* Jayaswal suggests that the śūdra could be a member of the *paura* body. But Maskarin's commentary on the said passage interprets *paura* as *samānasthānavāsī*, an inhabitant of the same place.[2] We are on more secure ground about the vaiśya membership of the *paura*, which is implied by merchants acting as president of that body.[3] There are several instances of the *gahapatis* (vaiśyas and śūdras according to Jasyaswal) acting as members of the *naigama*, which probably was a substitute for the *paura* in the period represented by the Jātakas.[4] The near contemporary account of Megasthenes states that husbandmen (*e.g.* vaiśyas and śūdras) do not go to town to take part in its tumult for any other purpose,[5] which may imply that the *paura* was confined to the people of the town. In the Pāli texts princes also appear as *negamas*,[6] but their number does not seem to be great.

Regarding the membership of the *jānapada* body there are two sets of evidence. The Buddhist sources inform us that the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas were called *jānapadas*.[7] The *Śānti Parva* refers to the *mantrin* as a *jānapada*, which shows that probably in early times even important ministers attended it.[8] But a passage from the *Rāmāyaṇa* excludes brāhmaṇas and a section of

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1. Jayaswal, op. cit., Chs. XXVII and XXVIII; V. R. R. Dikshitar, *Hindu Administrative Institutions*, pp. 156-58; A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, pp. 101-9; Dikshitar, "Notes on the Paura Jānapada" and "Reply of N. N. Law" *IHQ*, vi (1930), pp. 181, 183-84.
2. *Gautama*, VI. 10.
3. Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 275.
4. Ibid.
5. Megasthenes, XXXIII. *McCrindle*, op. cit., p. 85.
6. Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 273.
7. Ibid.
8. *kṛtaprajñaścamedhāvī budhojānapadaḥ śuciḥ sarvakarmasu yaḥ śuddhaḥ sa mantraṃ śrotumarhati. ŚP*, 84. 38.

the kṣatriyas (called *balamukhyas*) from the membership of the *jānapada*[1]. Perhaps the Buddhist references indicate an earlier stage of development. In later times as class distinctions became rigid, there grew a tendency to exclude the two upper classes from the meetings of the *paura* and *jānapada*, where the members of the lower castes could meet them on equal terms.

The functions of the *paura* and *jānapada* may throw some light on the nature of their composition. Since consideration of taxation was regarded as one of the chief functions[2] of the *paura* and *jānapada*, in all probability the tax-free brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas could not be their members. Their membership in later times was perhaps confined to the vaiśyas and śūdras, whose important representatives assembled and deliberated over matters which affected them. Judged in this light, the *paura* and *jānapada* would appear to be territorial orders of the vaiśyas and perhaps of free śūdras, not having any real voice in the affairs of the state but summoned by the king or his agents for the collection of taxes. The Jain sources inform us that there was a *parisā* (an assembly) of the *gāhāvais* (vaiśyas and śūdras),[3] but whether it had to do anything with the collection of taxes is not known. Arguing on this basis of the nature of the *paura* and *jānapada*, it would appear that members of the lower classes were sounded on matters of taxation but ignored in matters of administration.

The maintenance of order and the administration of justice were the primary functions of the early state, but the machinery framed for the purpose was a superstructure raised on relations existing between the four social orders. In fact the effect of the varṇa system is to be seen most clearly in the organization of the judicial system and the legislation framed by the brāhmaṇical lawgivers. The appointment of judges was to be made on caste basis. Manu and Yājñavalkya give the first preference to the brāhmaṇas; failing them, members of the next two classes could be appointed as judges, but on no account could a śūdra be permitted to hold this office.[4] Viṣṇu

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1. *brāhmaṇābalamukhyāśca paurajānapadaiḥ saha. Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*, II. 19-20.
2. Jayaswal, op. cit., pp. 262-63.
3. J. C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India*, p. 71.
4. *Manu*, VIII. 20-21; *Yāj.*, 2-3 with Vijñāneśvara's commentary.

(about A. D. 300) provides that the administration of justice should be entrusted to well-instructed brāhmaṇas, either accompanying the king or alone.[1] Kātyāyana also repeats the injunction of the previous authorities and affirms that in no case should a śūdra be appointed as judge (*prāḍavivāka*).[2] According to him, a few merchants, who are men of high family, could be present in the court (could act as *sabhyas*).[3]

A very little known[4] but prominent feature of the brāhmaṇical law code is its class legislation. It is to be found in the law of evidence and in the penalties prescribed for offences against person, property, reputation, etc. To begin with the law of evidence, the outcast, one fallen from his varṇa duties, could not act as a witness,[5] and members of one caste could not appear as witnesses for persons of other castes. It was laid down that a brāhmaṇa shall act as a witness for a brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya for a kṣatriya, a vaiśya for a vaiśya, a śūdra for a śūdra, and a woman for a woman.[6] It was further provided that *dāsas* (slaves) or *bhṛtakas* (servants), obviously recruited from the śūdra varṇa, must not be examined as witnesses.[7] While deposing, members of different castes were to be administered different kinds of oath and shown different kinds of treatment.[8] The same discrimination obtained in matters of ordeal. Yājñavalkya lays down the ordeals of weight, fire, water, and poison, respectively for the four *varṇas*.[9]

Like the code of Hammurabi or the Anglo-Saxon code, the Dharmaśāstras prescribe different punishments for different varṇas for the same offence. The value of the compensatory fine in the case of death varies from caste to caste. Two lawgivers of about the fifth century B.C. lay down that for slaying a kṣatriya the offender has to give to the king one

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1. *Viṣṇu*, III. 72-73.
2. *brāhmaṇo yatra na syāttu kṣatriyaṃtatra yojayet, vaiśyaṃ vā dharmśāstrajñāṃ śūdraṃ yatnena varjayet.* Verse 67.
3. *Kātya.*, Verse 58.
4. B. N. Dutt was the first to emphasise this aspect in his work *Studies in Indian Social Polity.*
5. *Viṣṇu*, VIII. 2.
6. *strīṇāṃ sākṣinaḥ striyaḥ kuryāddvijānāṃ saḍṛśaḥ dvijāḥ, śūdrānāṃ santaḥ śūdrāsca antyānāmantyayonayaḥ, Vas. Dh. S.*, XVI, 30; *Manu*, VIII.18; *Yāj.*, II. 19.
7. *Manu*, VIII. 70.
8. *Gautama*, VIII, 20-23; *Manu*, VIII. 88-89.
9. II. 98.

thousand cows and a bull in expiation of his sin, for slaying a vaiśya one hundred cows and a bull, and for slaying a śūdra ten cows and a bull.[1] Four later lawgivers provide for similar discriminatory rules.[2] It sounds shocking to the modern democratic mind to learn that Baudhāyana, Āpastamba and Manu prescribe the same fine for killing a śūdra as for killing a dog.[3] Several lawgivers ordain that, if a man of lower caste strikes a man of higher caste, he shall be deprived of the limb which he uses.[4] It is possible to produce examples of such laws in cases of defamation,[5] stealing,[6] inheritance,[7] etc. Indeed there is hardly any conceivable sphere of life, economic, political or social, where there is no legal discrimination between the different varṇas. The Dharmaśāstra, and the *smṛti* section of the epics and the Purāṇas, are replete with such discriminatory regulations. The law-books of the Gupta period softened some of these provisions, leading to some improvement in the legal status of the fourth varṇa.[8] The development was perhaps somewhat similar to that which we notice in the Byzantine empire of Justinian (527-565), under whom procedure was simplified in manumitting slaves,[9] but class distinctions ruled in the penalties of criminal law. Thus if a rich man forged, he was deported; if a poor man did he went to the ghastly toil of the mines[10] In Gupta India, however, legal discrimination was not directly based on economic distinctions but on varṇa divisions, which were closely connected with economic status.[11]

Between the beginning of such discriminatory laws with the early law-books and their climax with Manu, Kauṭilya's legislation introduces a liberal interlude, its object being to

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1. *Baudh.*, I. 10. 19. 1 and 2; *Āpastamba*, 1. 9. 24. 1-4.
2. *Gautama*, XXII. 14-16; *Vas. Dh. S.*, XX. 31-33; *Manu*, XI. 130-31; *Vīṣṇu*, L. 1-7 and 14.
3. *Baudh.*, 1. 10. 19. 6; *Āpastamba*, 1. 9. 25. 13; *Manu*, XI. 132.
4. *Manu*, VIII. 279; *Yāj*, II 215; *Gautama*, XII. 1.
5. *Gautama*, XII. 11-13.
6. *Viṣṇu*, IX. 11-14.
7. *Baudh.*, II. 2. 3. 10; *Vas. Dh. S.*, XVII. 48-50; *Viṣṇu*, III. 32; *Gautama* X. 31; *Manu*, IX. 151; *Yāj.*, II. 125; *AŚ*, III. 6
8. *Śūdras*, pp. 250-51.
9. Cf. Ibid., pp. 228-29.
10. Jack Lindsay, *Byzantium into Europe*, p. 111.
11. This has been discussed in the author's *Some Economic Aspects of the Caste System in Ancient India*.

provide a scheme of imperial laws overriding petty considerations of caste. In consonance with his view that moderation is the essence of the administration of justice,[1] Kauṭilya tries to lessen the rigours of class legislation. According to him in certain cases capital punishment could be inflicted even upon the brāhmaṇas,[2] and in others his face could be branded so as to mark him as a criminal.[3] For giving false evidence he possibly prescribes the same fine for members of all the castes.[4] While the law-books prescribe different rates of interest for different classes, Kauṭilya only states that an interest of a *paṇa* and a quarter per month is just.[5] It seems that Kauṭilya considers a section of the śūdras as Āryas and hence does not agree to their enslavement.[6] Aśoka expresses a similar attitude when he ordains that kindness should be shown to the serfs and slaves. In spite of all this there is hardly any fundamental difference between Kauṭilya and the authors of Dharmaśāstras on questions of class legislation. An illustration of the point is his law regarding sexual relations, according to which, for adultery with a brāhmaṇa woman, a kṣatriya shall be subjected to the highest fine, a vaiśya deprived of his property, and a śūdra burnt alive wound in mats.[7] Further examples of this type can be produced from Kauṭilya's laws regarding defamation, assault and offence of eating forbidden food.[8]

How far did class legislation work in practice? The very fact that it forms a common feature of all law-books shows that it must have its roots in the actual life. As Hopkins says in another connection: "the unanimity of the legal works in most of these particulars would point to their universal custom.[9]" Corroborative evidence from early Jain literature also points to the same direction. A Jain text of about the fourth century A. D. refers to four kinds of *parisā* (orders) in the

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1. *yathārhadaṇḍaḥ pūjyaḥ. AŚ*, I. 4.
2. *brāhmaṇaṃ tamapaḥ praveśayet. AŚ*, IV. 9.
3. *tasyābhiśastāṅko lalāṭe. AŚ*, IV. 8.
4. *AŚ*, III. 9.
5. *sapādapaṇā dharmyā māsavṛddhiḥ paṇaśatasya. AŚ*, III. 9.
6. *Śūdras*, pp. 163-66.
7. *AŚ*, IV. 13.
8. Ibid., III. 18-19; IV. 13.
9. Op. cit., p. 104.

administration of justice. We learn that for the same crime an offender from the *khattiya* order was beheaded, the offender from the *gāhāvai* (vaiśya and śūdra) order was burnt to death on a pile of bark, the offender from the *māhaṇa* order was either branded on the body as a criminal or was banished, and the offender who was an *isi* (*ṛṣi*) was admonished mildly.[1] Another Jain text informs us of a case in which a brāhmaṇa killed a washerman and dyed his body with the blood. When the guild of washermen went to the king's court, they returned disappointed without getting justice because they found the brāhmaṇa sitting there.[2] These references from the Jain literature of the early centuries of the Christian era show that class legislation was not a paper business, but actually worked in practice. The whole thing, as embodied in the brāhmaṇical law-books, may not have been applied literally, but unless sufficient evidence to the contrary is forthcoming it is difficult to believe that it was not observed in its essence.

A superficial review of the varṇa in relation to law and politics may create the impression that in all administrative and judicial matters the brāhmaṇa got the first place, the kṣatriya came second, the vaiśya followed next, and the śūdra got the last place. But there are good reasons to think that the kṣatriya was nearer to the brāhmaṇa and the vaiśya nearer to the śūdra.[3] U. N. Ghoshal cites a number of examples, which show the existence and importance of close political alliance between the two vital social forces, the brāhmaṇas and the kṣatriyas, during the later Vedic period.[4] More instances are found in post-Vedic times. If the brāhmaṇical literature emphasises the primacy of the brāhmaṇas, the Buddhist and Jain literature, although a little biased towards the *seṭṭhis* (merchants) and *gahapatis* (peasant householders) because of their financial support, lays stress on the primacy of the kṣatriyas. None of

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1. Quoted in J. C. Jain's *Life in Ancient India*, p. 71.
2. Ibid., p. 65.
3. Hopkins was the first to make this suggestion more than sixty years ago in his works *Relation of the Four Castes in Manu and Position of the Ruling Caste in the Epic*. It was further pursued by G. S. Guhrye in *Caste and Race in India* and utilised by S. A. Dange to draw new conclusions in his book *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*. The various aspects of this central point need further examination.
4. *A History of Hindu Public Life*, pt. 1, pp. 73-80,

these, or no other branch of ancient literature, pleads for the primacy of the vaiśyas or śūdras. In the Jātaka stories whenever the kṣatriya loses his throne, he does it to the brāhmaṇas.[1] They mention several anti-royal revolts engineered by the combined leadership of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas. The same idea is expressed by Kauṭilya in these words : "Royal power (*kṣatra*) triumphs even without arms and ever remains invincible when it is held up by the brāhmaṇas, is sanctioned by the counsels of ministers (*mantrins*), and follows the precepts of *śāstra*."[2] The later Dharmaśāstras dilate upon the necessity of having a common front of the two upper orders and in doing so they relegate the vaiśyas to the position of the śūdras. Manu clearly states that kṣatriyas cannot prosper without brāhmaṇas and brāhmaṇas without kṣatriyas, but being closely united they prosper in this world and the next.[3] He naturally enjoins the king to carefully compel the vaiśyas and śūdras to do their work otherwise the whole world would become chaotic (*vyākula*).[4] The measure recommended here is similar to the one we find in the Roman empire, where in the third century A.D. an attempt was made to compel the slaves and lower orders to stick to their functions. In the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, a work of early mediaeval period, cow slaughter by a vaiśya or a śūdra is regarded as an offence of the same nature.[5] It further states that a vaiśya who kills a vaiśya or a śūdra is equally sinful,[6] so that the same value is attached to the life of persons of both the lower classes.

Except the Jātakas, the sources quoted above may be described as representing the theoretical position. But the political combination and importance of the two upper classes is generally confirmed by literary and epigraphic sources. Such a situation obtained in the republican as well as the monarchical states. We have already referred to the correlation of class forces in the republic of about the sixth to the fourth cen-

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1. Jātaka. iii, 513-14.
2. *brāhmaṇenaidhitaṃ kṣatraṃ mantrimantrābhimantritam, jayatyajitamatyantaṃ śāstrānugamaśastritam. AŚ*, I. 9.
3. *Manu*, IX. 322.
4. Ibid., VIII. 418.
5. *Kṛṣṇajanmakāṇḍa* (Allahabad, 1920), LXXXV, p. 407.
6. Ibid., pp. 418-19.

tury B. C., in which the kṣatriya aristocracy ranked higher in the social scale than the brāhmaṇas and *gahapatis*, not to speak of inferior classes.[1] As regards post-Maurya republics, the use of the terms Mālavya and Kṣaudrakya for the non-brāhmaṇas and non-kṣatriyas by Patañjali shows that at least in the republics of Mālavas and Kṣudrakas the two upper classes lorded it over the lower classes.[2]

So far as the monarchies are concerned, epigraphic records of the Gupta period suggest political combination between the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas effected by means of matrimonial alliances. There is the well-known example of the marriage of the Vākāṭaka brāhmaṇa prince with a kṣatriya princess of Bhāraśiva Nāga family.[3] The Poona Plate of Prabhāvatī Gupta shows that this daughter of Candra Gupta II was married to the Vākāṭaka brāhmaṇa ruler Rudrasena II in the fourth century A. D. The Mandasore inscription of Yaśodharman of Malwa mentions the brāhmaṇa Ravikīrtti as the husband of Bhānuguptā, the sister of the Gupta ruler Bhānugupta (A. D. 501-11).[4] Kākutsthavarman, the brāhmaṇa king of the Kadamba family, got his daughter married to Gupta and other rulers. We also learn that Hastibhoja, a brāhmaṇa minister of the Vākāṭaka *mahārāja* Devasena, was descended from a kṣatriya lady married to his ancestor, the brāhmaṇa Soma.[5]

Although throughout the period under review there seems to have been the combined domination of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas it seems that till Maurya times the principal role in the combine was that of the kṣatriyas, influenced by the heterodox ideology of the Buddhists and Jains. But in post-Maurya and Gupta times the mantle fell on the brāhmaṇas or brāhmaṇical rulers bred in the orthodox Dharmaśāstra ideology. Later texts generally give the first place to the brāhmaṇas. While the phase of kṣatriya domination resulted in the centralisation of the state, that of brāhmaṇical domination

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1. Supra, p. 122, fn. 4.
2. Patañjali on *Pāṇini*, IV. 1. 168 and *Kāśikā* on *Pāṇini*, V. 3. 114.
3. CII, iii, no. 56, ll. 2-7.
4. Ibid., p. 152.
5. Ibid.

set in motion the process of its feudalisation. The power and influence of the brāhmaṇas rested mainly on gifts made to them. A brāhmaṇa, whether learned or ignorant, deserved to be a donee and could accept gifts without any scruples.[1] Further, in early mediaeval times, the people were required to pay to the brāhmaṇas a regular tax called *brāhmaṇaviṃśati*[2], comparable to the tithe collected by the Church in mediaeval Europe. This shows that the producing population was brought under the obligation to support the priests, for this tax, which accounted for a 20th part of the produce, was recognised and hence indirectly sanctioned by the state. But the most important factor that contributed to the growth of the brāhmaṇical power was the practice of land grants, the virtues of which were extolled in the Dharmaśāstras and the didactic portions of the epic and the Purāṇas. The early Buddhist texts seem to suggest that the process of land grants to the brāhmaṇas had begun at least as early as the fourth century B. C.,[3] but it assumed serious proportions by Gupta times. The political results of such a process, as would appear from epigraphic evidence, were bound to prove fatal to the organization of a centralised state.

Notwithstanding the difference in the character of the kṣatriya-dominated centralised Maurya state on the one hand, and the brāhmaṇa-dominated decentralised post-Maurya and Gupta state on the other, there seems to be hardly any alteration in the position of the vaiśyas and śūdras so far as their exclusion from the high offices of the state is concerned. It seems that the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas constituted the ruling class and the vaiśyas and śūdras formed the ruled class, and this in spite of the fact that the latter two accounted for the overwhelming majority of the population. Some merchants who acted as heads of corporate bodies or were sufficiently rich may have been the objects of special favours, but on the whole the two lower clases were excluded from important political bodies and higher

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1. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, ii, 117.
2. *IA*, vii, 75, 79, 85; *pūrvaprattadevabrahmadeyabrāhmaṇa viṃśatirahitam*. *EI*, viii, no. 20A (A. D. 639-40), l. 45; 20B (A. D. 640-41), l. 48.
3. Supra, p. 137, B. C. Law, op. cit., p. 162.

public offices. This seems to be more true especially in the case of the śūdras. Although Yājñavalkya, who otherwise adopts a liberal attitude towards the śūdra, declares him to be without rights (*adhikārahīna*) in religious matters[1], it is pretty certain that he was also excluded from high public offices.

Aristotle states that, if many poor men are excluded from office, the state would be necessarily full of enemies.[2] Similar views were not expressed by ancient Indian thinkers, and it is difficult to find out the reaction of the lower classes to the discriminatory measures because of lack of literature written from the standpoint of the vaiśyas and śūdras. The scattered references in the Jātakas, Dharmasūtras, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, later portions of the *Mahābhārata*, *Manu Smṛti* and the *Viṣṇu Smṛti* are meagre and unsatisfactory. Still something can be said on their basis. To begin with the Jātakas, in a course of revolt against the plundering rule of the king and the priest the *negamas* and the *jānapadas* (obviously including the vaiśyas and śūdras)[3] do play their part, but theirs is the role of acting as auxiliaries, the principals being the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas. The people beat the plundering priest and the king to death, and the Bodhisatta, who is a brāhmaṇa, is raised to the throne.[4] In another case the people hasten to kill the tyrannical kign with sticks and stones, but he is saved by divine intervention and banished out of the city.[5] These stories provide evidence of the kingly and priestly collusion for the oppression of the common folk, whose revolt results in the transfer of power from one faction of the upper classes to another faction. The traditional account in the *Mahābhārata* states that the śūdras and vaiśyas went out of control and violated brāhmaṇa women during the period of anarchy, which followed the slaughter of the kṣatriyas by Paraśurāma.[6] It is difficult to assign this account

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1. *Yāj.*, III. 262.
2. F. W. Coker, *Readings in Political Philosophy*, p. 66.
3. *suṇantu mejānāpadā negamā ca samāgatā...rājā vilumāate rāṭṭam brāhmaṇo ca purohito. Jātaka*, iii, 513-14.
4. Ibid.
5. *Jāt.*, vi, 156 ff.
6. *tataḥ śūdrāśca vaiśyāśca yathāsvairapracāriṇaḥ, avartanta dvijāgryāṇāṃ dāreṣu bharatarṣabha. ŚP.* 49-61.

to any definite period, but it seems to have some basis in fact and justifies Manu's theory that the king should compel the vaiśyas and śūdras to work. We have some indication of the anti-state activities of the śūdras in the period under review, although they cannot be compared in any way with the revolts of slaves in Rome and those of helots in Sparta.

Chapter XIII

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE ARTHAŚĀSTRA OF KAUṬILYA

I. INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON THE POLICY OF THE STATE

In addition to varṇa religion appears as an important factor in the development of ancient Indian polity. The Vedic rituals give us the first clear indication of close connection between religion and politics in ancient India. When monarchy is established on a firm footing in post-Vedic times this connection takes on a different shape. While the Vedic rituals tended both to strengthen and restrict royal power, the religious measures of the state, as known from the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, were more intended to strengthen royal power than limit it. Although Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* does not contain any independent section on religion and politics, there are numerous references to this subject scattered throughout his treatise. They show how considerations of religion shape the internal policy of the state and how religion is used as an effective instrument, especially in relation to external enemies.

As regards internal policy the Kauṭilyan state upholds the brāhmaṇical social order and follows the brāhmaṇical religious practices. Brāhmaṇism, as developed on the basis of the Vedic religion, may be regarded as the bedrock of the *Arthaśāstra* polity; what is *dharma* (righteous) and what is *adharma* (unrighteous) is learnt from the three Vedas.[1] The *varṇāśrāma dharma*, which in post-Vedic times had become the foundation of the social structure, is expounded by Kauṭilya[2] in such terms as we find it in early law-books. He insists that every varṇa must perform its functions, and, at the end of this exposition, concludes that the person who observes his duty attains heaven and infinite bliss. In case he violates his duty, the world is destroyed on account of the confusion of castes.[3] What is more significant,

1. *AŚ*, I. 2.
2. Ibid., I. 3.
3. Ibid,

Kauṭilya instructs the king that he should never allow the people to deviate from their duty. For if human society adheres to the practices befitting the āryas, is based on the law of the four social classes and stages, and is maintained in accordance with the precepts of the three Vedas, it will prosper and never perish.[1] Thus the king is required to maintain a society which derives its ultimate sanction from the Vedas. At one place the Kauṭilyan king is called *dharmapravartaka*, which is taken to mean that he is the promulgator of a new *dharma*. From this it cannot be inferred that *dharma* does not place any limitation on the powers of the king who enjoys absolute authority in this respect.[2] The context in which this epithet is applied to the king does not warrant this inference. It is stated that, if the *varṇāśrama dharma* perishes, the king should act as the founder of the *dharma*,[3] which clearly leaves no freedom to the king to establish the social order of his liking but merely enjoins him to restore and revive the order which is destroyed. Evidently Kauṭilya wants the head of the state to preserve and enforce the brāhmaṇical social organization, which rests for its validity on the Vedas.

The external policy of the Kauṭilyan state is guided by religious considerations. In the pacification of the conquered peoples the king is asked to pay attention to their religious practices and susceptibilities. Kauṭilya states that the king should show his devotion to the territorial and religious festivals and the amusements of the conquered people.[4] He should worship the local gods and favour the orators and religious and intellectual leaders with gifts of land and money, and remission of taxes.[5] It is further said that he should do away with the unrighteous practices (*adharmiṣṭam*) and establish righteous practices in their place. He should prohibit the slaughter of animals for half a month during the period of *cāturmāsya* (a season of four months), for four nights during the periods of the full moon, and for a night on the day of the birth star of the

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1. Ibid.
2. Cf. H. N. Sinha, *Sovereignty in Ancient India*, pp. 149, 199.
3. *caturvarṇāśramasyāyam lokasyācārarakṣaṇāt niaśyatāṃ sarvadharmāṇāṃ rājā dharmapravartakaḥ. AŚ*, III. 1.
4. *AŚ*, XIII. 5.
5. *sarvatrāśramapūjanaṃ ca vidyāvākyadharmaśūrapuruṣāṇāṃ ca bhūmidravyadānaparihārān kārayet.* Ibid.

conqueror or of the national star. The king should also interdict the slaughter of females as also the castration of young ones.[1] In the enemy country the life of an ārya and the property belonging to gods, brāhmaṇas and ascetics should not be enjoyed by the king.[2] According to the provisions, the king is required to respect the religious sentiments of the conquered people not only by following a policy of toleration, but also by positively observing their religious practices and enforcing the main tenets of the brāhmaṇical social order in which the priests enjoyed several immunities.

Kauṭilya's attitude towards the brāhmaṇas, who were the ideological custodians of the existing social order and were mainly concerned with religious affairs, deserves careful consideration. The later Vedic texts allow three important privileges to the brāhmaṇas, exemption from physical torture, and the right to honour and gifts. All these concessions are generally recognised by Kauṭilya. According to him, the brāhmaṇa is described as *apīḍanīya*[3] which implies his immunity from physical punishment, but in the *Sānti Parva* he is repeatedly described as *adaṇḍya*[4] which seems to suggest his exemption from all kinds of punishments. Exception in the *Arthaśāstra* is, however, made in the case of rape with the wife of a teacher, selling liquor and committing theft, for all of which the face of the brāhmaṇa convict has to be branded.[5] There is at any rate no doubt about the highest place of honour being accorded to the brāhmaṇas in the *Arthaśāstra*, which states that they occupy the same position among human beings which gods occupy in heaven.[6] This view of the status of the priestly class is perhaps corroborated by epigraphic evidence, for Aśoka seems to have exposed the brāhmaṇas who were considered deities on the earth.[7] Similarly Kauṭilya unequivocally recognises the brāhmaṇas' special privileges to officiate at the sacrifices and to receive gifts

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1. *AŚ*, XIII. 5.
2. *paraviṣayādvā vikrameṇānītaṃ yathāpradiṣṭaṃ rājñā bhuñjita anyatra āryaprāṇebhyo devabrāhmaṇatapasvidravyebhyaśca*. *AŚ*, III. 16.
3. *AŚ*, IV. 8.
4. 56. 22; 59, 69, 114.
5. *AŚ*, IV. 8.
6. *ye devā devalokeṣu ca brāhmaṇāḥ*. Ibid., XIV. 3.
7. Here the interpretation of Sènart and H. P. Śāstri has been followed, but see Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 5th edn., p. 357.

in return. These are not only retained but sanctified by the laws enforced by the state. We have detailed regulations about the payment of the sacrificial fee. Thus in case the priest dies, the fee as fixed according to the nature and importance of the sacrifice, big or small, is to be paid to the heir of the priest.[1] If a sacrificer dismisses a priest before the completion of the sacrifice, he is to be punished with the first amercement.[2] Like other lawgivers Kauṭilya is, however, in favour of sending out those priests who do not maintain the prescribed standards.[3] The real significance of these provisions lies in the fact that they are incorporated in the section which deals with the wages of the labourers and those engaged in co-operative undertakings, which implies that *dakṣiṇās* (sacrificial gifts) are not voluntary but obligatory inasmuch as they are to be enforced by the state.

More important evidence of the intimate connection of the state with the brāhmaṇical religion is to be found in the regulations, which provide for the state patronage of several gods and their worship. In connection with the construction of the capital Kauṭilya lays down that the northern area of the city should be reserved for the tutelary deity of the city (*nagaradevatā*) and for the brāhmaṇas.[4] In the centre of the city are to be located half a dozen divinities.[5] Deities of architecture are to be established in the corners, and guardian deities of quarters in quarters appropriate to them. The principal gates of the capital should be named after gods and be called Brāhma, Aindra, Yāmya and Saināpatya, and places of worship and pilgrimage should be constructed inside the capital.[6] In the section dealing with the duties of the treasurer it is provided that the three-storey treasury should be graced with the presence of a guardian deity. All the various buildings connected with the treasury should be furnished with necessary means to worship the appropriate guardian gods.[7] Similarly, while

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1. *AŚ*, III. 14.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., II. 4.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., II. 5.

dealing with the duties of the superintendent of agriculture Kauṭilya provides that at the time of sowing seeds a formula should be recited in saluting God Prajāpati Kaśyapa and invoking the blessings of Sītā Devī.[1]

The *Arthaśāstra* prescribes several rituals for warding off providential visitations such as fire, flood and similar other natural calamities. Although it is not stated whether these are to be performed on behalf of the state, this can be inferred from the qualifications laid down for the office of the royal *purohita*, who is assigned the highest pay of 48,000 paṇas. It is ordained that the chief priest should be capable of preventing calamities, providential or human, by performing such expiatory rites as are provided in the *Atharva Veda*.[2] Probably his office is intended to be used in the worship of Indra, Gaṅgā, Parvata and the Mahākacchapa in case of drought; in the worship of rats against rat menance;[3] in the worship of snakes against snake menace; in the worship of the Parvata against the menace of tigers and in the worship of the *caityas* (funeral mounds, or sanctuaries) against the menace of demons (*rākṣasas*).[4] Further, the chief priest seems to have been required to officiate in the performance of oblations and the making of offerings to gods on ordinary and full moon days.[5] The obligation of the state does not cease with the appointment of the *purohita* for the purpose of obviating bad days. Kauṭilya further enjoins the king to honour and settle in his kingdom such accomplished ascetics as are expert in magical arts and consequently able to ward off providential visitations.[6] His indication of royal responsibility for the protection of the people against natural calamities is in tune with the primitive view of the similar functions of the king, but the *Arthaśāstra* provision for the office of the chief priest, one of the three highly paid posts in the state, shows that the king was not expected to exercise this function himself, as in the case of the primitive chief, but through an independent religious functionary appointed for the purpose.

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1. Ibid., II. 24.
2. *AŚ*, I. 9.
3. Ibid., IV, 3; additional reading found in the Munich ms.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

In some provisions Kauṭilya affords special protection to wealth owned by the temples. He lays down that the village elders should augment the property of the temples along with that of the minors.[1] Provision is also made for the protection of the *devapaśu*, which term is taken to mean certain animals left in the name of the god for the use of the community.[2] But if we rely on the comment of T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī to another passage of the *Arthaśāstra*, it would appear that this term probably stands for animals owned by the gods and temples. For it is laid down that those who steal or take possession of images, animals, employees, fields, houses, gold, gold coins, precious stones and crops belonging to the gods are either to be beheaded or have to pay the highest amercement[3]. The severity of this provision indicates special concern about the protection of the property belonging to gods and temples.[4] Particular favour is shown by Kauṭilya to sacred places in general. It is stated that, if hindrance is caused to the forests of brāhmaṇas, *soma* plantations, temples, places of gods, sacrifice and pilgrimage, steps shall be taken to remove it first and then to take care of the lands belonging to ordinary peasants.[5] Several rules are intended to secure the sanctity of the images of gods. It is ordained that when a senseless person indulges in sexual intercourse with the idols of goddesses, he shall be fined twenty-four paṇas.[6] Another law relates to the protection of the sacred trees, which are the objects of worship by the common people. If these trees are felled, the offenders are made liable to fines double the amount meant for felling ordinary trees. Similar fine, however, is recommended in the case of cutting trees, which mark the boundaries or which are grown in the king's forests.[7] This law reminds us of the provision of Hammurabi, who prescribes the same punishment for stealing the property belonging to the temple or the palace.

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1. Ibid., II. 1.
2. *AŚ*, IV. 13; Tr. p. 263.
3. Ibid., IV. 10; *TGS*, ii, 166.
4. Manu (IX. 280) broadens the scope of this rule by providing that those who break into a royal storehouse, an army, or a temple, and those who steal elephants, horses or chariots, should be slain by the king without any hesitation.
5. *AŚ*., III. 9.
6. Ibid., IV. 13.
7. Ibid., III. 19.

Persons and things associated with religious worship are granted some concessions. Commodities intended for sacrificial performance, worship of gods and any religious rite are allowed exemption from toll.[1] A śrotriya, a brāhmaṇa learned in the Veda can take flowers, fruits, and part of barley wheat as *agrāyaṇa* (first fruits), and obviously he shall not be held guilty.[2] All such references sufficiently demonstrate that the policy of the Kauṭilyan state is influenced by religious considerations, involving preferential treatment of the priests, gods, temples and sacred trees. At one place in the *Arthaśāstra* the king is made responsible to divine power. It is stated that, if the king punishes an innocent man, he shall throw into water, dedicating to Varuṇa, a fine equal to thirty times the unjust imposition, and afterwards this amount shall be distributed among the brāhmaṇas. Kauṭilya adds that by this act the king shall be free from the sin of unjust imposition; this is because Varuṇa is the ruler of sinners among men.[3] The present ordinance of Kauṭilya involves three important points. First, the king is not considered accountable to any human agency for his acts of commission and omission. Secondly, if Varuṇa is the *śāstā rājā* (ruling king) among men who commit wrongs, where is the room for the jurisdiction of the earthly king ? Since the king is considered responsible to Varuṇa, it is obvious that he is supposed to derive his competence from that god. Thirdly, how this responsibility is to be exercised in effect ? On behalf of the god this can be done only by some human agency which is represented by the brāhmaṇas, who in fact collect the fines from the king and thus exercise *de facto* power over the king. Strikingly enough the idea that the king has to pay a fine for the miscarriage of justice is to be found in Yājñavalkya, a law-book of the Gupta period.[4] Whether the idea of the ruler's responsibility to divine power has been borrowed by the Gupta lawgiver from Kauṭilya or whether this has been incorporated in the *Arthaśāstra* at a later stage is difficult to deter-

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1. Ibid., II. 21.
2. *AŚ*, II. 24.
3. *adaṇḍyadaṇḍane rājño daṇḍastriṃśadguṇe ambhasi, varuṇāya pradātavyo brāhmaṇebhyastataḥ param. AŚ*, IV. 13.
4. II. 307.

mine in the present state of the textual study of Kauṭilya.[1] This idea is expressed in a slightly different form by Manu, who declares that Varuṇa is the lord of fines inflicted on the great sinners just as, being the wielder of *daṇḍa*, he is also the lord of the kings.[2] But he does not state whether in case of miscarriage of justice the king should pay any fines to Varuṇa. At any rate if we accept the crucial passage of Kauṭilya at its face value, it will mean that our author imparts a theocratic character to the state.

How far Kauṭilya thinks in terms of divine kingship is difficult to say. One of his measures for winning the allegiance of the people is to depute spies for the propagation of the king's divinity among them. The folk in the town and countryside have to be convinced about his special visible quality, which entitles the king to burden them with fines and punishments. Therefore the spies are instructed to tell the people that kings who dispense rewards and penalties occupy the position of Indra and Yama. He who disregards them is afflicated with divine punishment. Such is the argument to be used in dispelling the doubts of the people of "low type."[3] This view of the divine element in the king is different from Kauṭilya's earlier statement, which implies that the king is ultimately responsible to Varuṇa, and indirectly through him to the brāhmaṇas. The present idea, however, seems to have been developed in Manu and the *Śānti Parva*, which ascribe the attributes of about half a dozen divinities to the king. But, unlike these post-Maurya texts, Kauṭilya nowhere states that the king is a great deity functioning in the form of a human being. Besides, his present view is dissimilar to the idea of the divine character of kingship prevalent in near contemporary Hellenistic monarchies. When Alexander conquered Egypt, he found it politically useful to accept the native idea that Pharaoh was a deity. In subsequent times this conception was inherited and welcomed by the Hellenistic monarchies of Egypt, Bactria, etc., which arose on the ruins of

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1. Further progress in the study of the *Arthaśāstra* will mainly depend on the determination of stratification in this text.
2. IX. 243-45.
3. *AŚ*, I. 13.

the Alexandrine empire.[1] They officially encouraged emperor-worship. In any case the Kauṭilyan comparison of the king with some gods could serve the purpose of strengthening royal power, and not priestly power which stood to gain by the theory that the king was responsible to Varuṇa.

In contrast to the favours extended to the brāhmaṇas Kauṭilya exhibits an attitude of antipathy towards the sects opposed to the brāhmaṇical system of life. Particularly the Pāṣaṇḍas, who included the Buddhist monks and were outside the pale of the Vedic system, are marked out for discriminatory treatment. The Pāṣaṇḍas and caṇḍālas are required to live on the border burial grounds.[2] Further, if the Pāśupatas, Śākya monks, etc., come to stay in charitable institutions, information to that effect has to be sent to the local officials called *gopa* or *sthānika*.[3] No such intimation is considered necessary if ascetics and śrotriyas of known character come to reside there.[4] Kauṭilya thinks that the abodes of the Pāṣaṇḍas provide shelter to suspicious characters, and hence spies are instructed to make a search for them in such places.[5] Possibly the Pāṣaṇḍas were associated with anti-state activities, for Kauṭilya lays down certain regulations regarding crimes committed by the Pāṣaṇḍas and the Kṣapaṇakas. It is provided that in lieu of paying fines they may perform penances or oblations or a ritual called *mahācchavardhana* in the name of the king for as many nights as the number of paṇas imposed on them. No such exemption, however, is to be granted if they are guilty of defamation, theft, assault and abduction of women.[6] Further, the Pāṣaṇḍas are not given any security of property. Kauṭilya ordains that spies can confiscate the property of the church of the Pāṣaṇḍas and of temples, provided it is not enjoyable by the brāmaṇas. It implies that the property of the brāhmaṇas is free from such attachment.[7]

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1. W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 49 ff. Tarn's view that the idea of the divinity of the king was borrowed by Alexander from Asia also does not apply to the case of India.
2. *AŚ*, II. 4.
3. Ibid., II. 36, on the basis of the commentary of T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., III. 16.
7. Ibid., V. 2.

Kauṭilya shows similar antipathy towards some classes of ascetics, whose movement is to be regulated by the state.[1] Only the *vānaprasthas* are permitted to settle in the countryside and not other kinds of *pravrajitas*.[2] An omnibus rule prohibits all kinds of heretical sects from participation in the feast meant for gods and ancestors. According to this, if the Śākyas, Ājīvikas and śūdra ascetics are invited at the feast, a fine of hundred paṇas shall be imposed on the guilty.[3] Further, those ascetics who indulge in unseemly conduct shall be prevented from doing so under penalty by the king, for such a practice amounts to *adharma*. And when *adharma* overwhelms *dharma*, ultimately it destroys the ruler himself.[4]

The references cited above bear witness to the intolerant policy of the Kauṭilyan state. This policy, however, does not amount to rank persecution, for the rigour of intolerance is relieved by a number of redeeming features. In several cases no distinction is made between the Pāṣaṇḍas and other sections of people. It is stated that the Pāṣaṇḍas and people of four castes can fix their abode in a large area, without offering any obstacle to one another.[5] This can be compared with the harsh attitude of Manu, who provides for the immediate expulsion of the Pāṣaṇḍas (understood as Buddhists, etc., by Sarvajñanārāyaṇa) from the capital or town (*pura*), along with some other undesirable elements[6], on the plea that because of their unrighteous conduct they disturb the loyal subjects.[7] Moreover, according to Kauṭilya, the business of Pāṣaṇḍas, like that of all other classes of people including the śrotriyas, should receive the attention of the king. Equality between heretics and others is ensured by the rule that kinsmen, śrotriyas or Pāṣaṇḍas cannot acquire the right of possession over the building of others, during the absence of the king, by mere

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1. Ibid., II. 1.
2. Ibid., III. 20.
3. Ibid., III. 16. Shamasastry gives a different translation of this passage, which is construed in *TGS*, ii, 99 as *pravrajyāsu vṛthācārā rājā daṇḍena vārayet, dharmo hyadharmopahataḥ śāstāraṃ hantyupekṣitaḥ*.
4. Ibid., III. 16.
5. IX. 225.
6. IX. 226. In the parallel verses in *ŚP*, 89. 13-14 the Pāṣaṇḍas are not mentioned.
7. Ibid., I. 19.

occupation thereof.[1] Hence as regards residence and attendance to their business the same law applies to the orthodox and heretical sects. But strict vigilance is to be kept over the movements and dwelling places of the heretics, who are prevented from mixing with the people of the countryside, perhaps the apprehension being that they might incite the people against the brāhmaṇical social order, a suspicion which is clearly shared by Manu. The present exposition of Kauṭilya's view of the religious policy clearly establishes the religious, especially the brāhmaṇical, character of the state. But this runs counter to some other pieces of evidence according to which the interests of the state override considerations of religion and priestly privileges. Thus it is stated that of the four legs of law, *carita* (custom), *vyavahāra* (agreement), *dharma* (the provisions of the law-books) and *rājaśāsana* (royal edicts) the succeeding item overrides the preceding one.[2] This clearly implies that royal edict supersedes all other sources of law. Moreover, it is explicitly stated that whenever *śāstra* (the brāhmaṇical law-book) comes into conflict with a royal decree based on the customs of the people (*dharmanyāya*), the latter shall prevail.[3] Thus in so far as priestly power is made subordinate to royal power this reflects the non-religious character of the state.

Further evidence of the non-religious character of the state is found in Kauṭilya's emphasis on the unquestioned loyalty of the officials to the head of the state. He does not like the high officials to be divided in their allegiance; their primary loyalty should be to the king and not to religious practices. This can be inferred from the nature of tests laid down for the examination of the character of those *amātyas* who are appointed in government departments. Thus only those *amātyas* who prove themselves above religious allurement deserve to be appointed to the post of judges. The test laid down for such appointment begins with the dismissal by the king of a priest who, when ordered, refuses to teach the Veda to a person who is without right to sacrifice. In such a situation, if in spite of the instigation of the

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1. Ibid., III. 16.
2. *AŚ*, III. 1.
3. Ibid., based on the commentary of *TGS*, ii, 10.

king's spies, the *amātyas* refuse to be provoked into action against the king, they are considered fit for employment in civil and criminal courts.[1] This suggests that high officials of the state such as judges are required to tender their primary allegiance to the king, even in violation of prevalent religious practices laid down by the brāhmaṇical religion, which does not permit the teaching of the Veda to one who is not entitled to the performance of the Vedic sacrifice (*ayājya*). This is another proof of the exaltation of royal power. It implies that the king may appoint as judges only such persons as can override religious considerations if necessary and faithfully execute royal orders in the administration of justice.

There seems to be some indication of the state control of even brāhmaṇical institutions. Kauṭilya provides for an officer known as the superintendent of temples (*devatādhyakṣa*), who is charged with the function of collecting at one place various kinds of property of the gods of the capital and countryside and depositing them in the royal treasury.[2] It is not made clear whether the temples have to pay any regular dues to the state or their property is forcibly confiscated by the state. But since the functions of the *devatādhyakṣa* are mentioned in the section on the replenishment of treasury, there is no doubt that the property of the temple is intended to be used for state purposes. This policy is, however, clearly to be followed only in relation to the property of the non-brāhmaṇical sects. But the comment of Patañjali to a passage of Pāṇini that the Mauryas sold the images of gods[3] might suggest that even the brāhmaṇical temples were not intended to be exempt from the policy of expropriation, which may have been adopted in emergent situations.

The foregoing analysis of the influence of religion on the policy of the state leaves no doubt that on many points, in the opinion of Kauṭilya , the policy of the state can hardly be conceived independently of religious considerations. But the relation between the two expresses itself in two contradictory ways. The Kauṭilyan state upholds the brāhmaṇical mode of

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1. *AŚ*, I. 10.
2. *AŚ*, V. 2.
3. *mauryairhiraṇyārthibhirarcāḥ prakalpitāḥ*...Pat. on *Paṇini*, V. 3. 99; cf. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, pp. 361-62.

life in so far as it is in consonance with its main objective, the maintenance of the *varṇāśrama dharma*, but discards the religious practices which stand in the way of the expansion of the state. This also seems to be the view of a school in the *Śānti Parva*, which states that if the teacher or friend acts against the interests of the seven state-elements he should be killed.[1] The same text, however, adds that the teacher should be abandoned.[2]

The Kauṭilyan state does care for gods and temples, and mostly confirms the privileges claimed by the priestly class. At the same time it adopts a policy of discrimination towards the heretical sects, a policy which is in line with the attitude of Manu but seems to have been modified by the lawgivers of Gupta times. Both Yājñavalkya[3] and Nārada[4] refer to the guilds of Pāṣaṇḍas and enjoin the king to enforce their rules and customs. This betokens a liberal attitude towards the heretical sects, which is well in accord with a similar view of the religious position of the śūdras during this period.[5] Although Kauṭilya does not allow the heretics semi-autonomous existence, his policy of discrimination is not carried to such extremes as occur in the idea of the state cult expounded by Plato in the *Laws*. For the sake of maintaining the integrity and unity of the state Plato introduces the state cult, which implies that certain religious beliefs and practices should be enforced among all sections of people. Those who violate them are either to be imprisoned or even put to death. But such persecution does not vitiate the policy of the Kauṭilyan state. Although Kauṭilya emphasises that the *dharma* based on the three Vedas has to be observed, the policy that he recommends towards the dissenters outside the Vedic fold is to keep watch on their dwelling places, to ban their entries into villages and to confiscate their property in order to meet the needs of the state treasury. They are to be punished when they commit crimes such as theft, assault, defamation and abduction of women. Such provisions do not

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1. 57- 5.
2. 57. 6-7.
3. *śreṇinaigamapākhaṇḍigaṇānāmapyayaṃ vidhiḥ, bhedaṃ caiṣāṃ nṛpo rakṣet pūrvavṛttiṃ ca pālayet*. II. 192.
4. X. 1-2.
5. *Śūdras*, pp. 268-78.

bear comparison with the type of sectarian intolerance in the *Laws*, which adduces the first reasoned defence of religious persecution.

The Kauṭilyan state is comparatively tolerant, but not secular, as has been suggested by some scholars. Secularism implies complete elimination of religious influence from the organised policies of the state, which is far from true in the case of Kauṭilya. In Indian tradition the special importance of Kauṭilya lies in the fact that in many ways his text overrides religious considerations to serve the cause of the state. In this sense he made the first serious attempt to reconstruct the science of polity and emancipate it from the influence of religion and theology. But because of the predominantly religious character of society in which he lived, he could not completely disentangle the state from the thraldom of religion.

II. SUPERSTITION AND POLITICS

A striking example of the practical character of the statecraft of Kauṭilya is his lack of faith in the efficacy of certain religious practices, and his exploitation of the credulous beliefs of the people for promoting the interests of the state, internal as well as external.[1] Internally several superstitious devices are suggested by him for augmenting the royal treasury. For instance, on some nights the king may set up a god or a sacred shrine, or may point out an evil omen, and then either for the sake of worshipping the god or for averting the calamity he may appropriate the collections raised on the pretext of holding congregations and processions.[2] He may use the untimely appearance of flowers and fruits in the temple garden to his advantage, and may declare the arrival of a god on this basis.[3] A spy in the guise of a Rākṣasa (demon) demanding a daily tribute of human beings may appear in the tree, and a false panic may be raised that an evil spirit has appeared. Thus a subscription (*hiraṇya*) may be raised from the people

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1. U. N. Ghoshal, *HPT*, p. 101.

2. *daivatacaityaṃ siddhapuṇyasthānamaupapādikaṃ vā rātrau utthāpya yātrāsamājābhyām ājīvet. AŚ*, V. 2.

3. *AŚ*, V. 2.

of the capital and countryside under the pretext of warding off evil spirits.[1] It seems that some of these measures were really put into effect. We learn from Patañjali that the images set up by the Maurya kings served as a source of income on account of their sale, and also provided livelihood (*jivikā*) through the offerings that were made to it.[2]

A serpent with several heads may be held up before the people and fees (*hiraṇya*) may be collected from the spectators.[3] Or a cobra may be rendered unconscious by diet, and credulous spectators may be invited to witness the sight on payment of fee[4]. Those who are sceptics may be administered a poisonous drink or may be sprinkled over with poisonous water to render them senseless, and then the spies may attribute their insensibility to the curse of gods.[5] Similarly, spies may cause the condemner of the god to be bitten by a cobra, and may ascribe this to the curse of the god. Further, under the pretext of adopting remedial measures against this ominous phenomenon, they may raise collections for filling the treasury.[6] Obviously the object in the last two cases is to coerce the rational elements into submission to superstitious practices and payment of money to the government. Thus all these devices enumerated by Kauṭilya are to be used by the state for fleecing the people by playing upon their superstition. They occur under the section' 'replenishment of the treasury"[7], which, according to Kauṭilya, is an important organ of the seven-element state.

Kauṭilya is very clear in his mind that religious formalities should not be a bar to the acquisition of wealth. According to him, some of the obstructions to profit (*lābhavighna*) are desire

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1. *caityopavanavṛkṣeṇa vā devatābhigamanamanārtavapuṣpaphalayuketna khyāpayet.* Ibid.

2. Comm. to *Pāṇini*, V. 3. 99; cf. Agrawala, op. cit., p. 362.

3. *surangāyukte vā kūpe nāgamaṇiyataśiraskaṃ hiraṇyopaharaṇe darśayet.* *AŚ*, V. 2.

4. *sarpadarśanamāhāreṇa pratibandhasanjñaṃ kṛtvā śraddadhānānāṃ darśayet.* Ibid.

5. *aśraddadhānānām ācamanaprokṣaṇeṣu rasaṃ upacāyya devatābhiśāpaṃ brūyāt.* Ibid.

6. *abhityaktaṃ daṃśayitvā vā yogadarśanapratikāreṇa vā kośābhisaṃharaṇaṃ kuryāt.* *TGS*, ii, 197.

7. *AŚ*, V. 2.

for the other world (*paralokāpekṣā*), adherence to virtuous life (*dhārmikatvam*), and faith in the auspiciousness of days and stars (*maṅgalatithinakṣatreṣṭitvam*)[1]. This implies that a person intent on gaining wealth should not care for these ingredients of religion. As regards belief in astrology, Kauṭilya clearly states that wealth will pass away from the childish man who enquires most after the stars. As he puts it, "wealth is the star for wealth; what will the stars do[2]?" In keeping with this principle Kauṭilya wants his ruler to do away with religious customs whenever they thwart the achievement of his objectives. He apparently wants to convince his ruler that religious practices are so many superstitions, of which the latter should take advantage in serving his interests.

Advantage is to be taken of this policy in dealing with the internal enemies of the state. It is provided that when a seditious person (*dūṣya*) is engaged in a sacrificial performance in a forest, fiery spies may murder him and carry away the corpse as that of an outcast.[3] Moreover, spies are instructed to lure the seditious person into the purchase of rich offerings to be made to the god to acquire a vast amount of treasure. When he brings out his newly-acquired wealth for the purpose, he may be caught red-handed in the very act of the purchase[4] and his whole property confiscated. Hence Kauṭilya does not believe in the performance of sacrifice by the opponents of the state whom he regards as condemnable and irreligious.[5] On the contrary he considers religious engagements of the seditious person as a suitable opportunity for punishing him.

But it is especially in dealing with the external enemies of the state that Kauṭilya makes use of sacrifices and worship. He lays down a number of contrivances for destroying the enemy in those places of worship and pilgrimage which he frequents out of faith.[6] To enumerate these contrivances, a wall or

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1. Ibid., IX. 4.
2. *nakṣatramatipṛcchantaṃ bālamarthotivartate artho hi arthasyanakṣatraṃ kiṃ kariṣyanti tārakāḥ. AŚ*, IX. 4.
3. *AŚ*, V. 2.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. *daivatejyāyāṃ yātrāyām amitrasya bahūni pūjyāgamasthānāni bhaktitaḥ. tatrāsya yogamubjayet. AŚ*, XII. 5.

stone may be let fall on the head of the enemy when he has entered a temple.[1] Stones or weapons may be showered on his head from the topmost storey.[2] An outdoor panel or a huge rod may be made to fall on the enemy.[3] Weapons concealed inside the body of an idol may be hurled at his head.[4] It is also laid down that when the enemy visits a temple or asectics, spies hidden in underground chambers or somewhere else may strike him.[5] Kauṭilya also provides that poisoned rice and water may be served in feeding the enemy's people in honour of gods or ancestors, and in conspiracy with traitors to his enemy he may strike the enemy with his concealed army.[6] Further, if the fort is surrounded by the enemy, the ruler may lie concealed in a hole bored in the body of an idol.[7]

Another masterly method recommended by Kauṭilya is that the enemy may be manoeuvred into the performance of certain sacrifices by the spies of the king, who should kill him in the act of performing the sacrifice.[8] In order to delude the enemy the ruler intent on conquest may himself undertake the performance of expiatory rites to stay the calamity, and thus may snare his enemy into the celebration of sacrifices.[9] The measures show that in contriving the end of the enemy the ruler should profit by the latter's religious preoccupations.

Resort is to be taken to religious camouflage for doing harm to the enemy in other ways. Thus Kauṭilya states that spies disguised as ascetics may serve the sacrificial beverage mixed with an intoxicant to the cowherds of the enemy, and thus may carry off their cattle.[10]

In an invasion of the enemy's country Kauṭilya thinks it of primary importance that the people should be convinced of

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1. *AŚ*, XII. 5.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. *AŚ*, XIII. 2.
6. *daivatopahāraśrāddhaprahavaṇeṣu vā rasaviddhamannapānamavasṛjya kṛtopajāpo dūṣyavyañjanairniṣpatya gūḍhasainyo' bhihanyāt. AŚ*, XII. 5.
7. *AŚ*, XII. 5.
8. *AŚ*, XIII. 2.
9. *etān vā yogānātmani darśayitvā pratikurvīta. pareṣāmupadeśārtham. tataḥ prayojayedyogān. AŚ*, XIII. 2.
10. *AŚ*, XIII. 2.

the omniscience and divinity of the king intent on conquest. Such a ruler should enthuse his people and overawe his enemy's people by giving publicity to his power of omniscience and close association with gods.[1] Kauṭilya lays down several artifices for the purpose, in which spies play a vital part. As to his omniscience, acting on the information brought by the spies about the activities of chief officers and seditious people the king should create the impression that he knows everything because of his supernatural power.[2] He should attribute his knowledge of foreign affairs to his power of reading omens, although he actually gets it through a domestic pigeon.[3] The methods for establishing the divine associations of the king are more numerous. The king should hold conversations with his spies, who suddenly appear as fire-gods in the midst of fire through an underground tunnel.[4] He can worship such spies when they rise up from water in the form of Nāgas.[5] He may arrange to exhibit the miraculous phenomenon of the spontaneous outbreak of fire in water.[6] He may sit on a raft in water, which is secretly but securely fastened by a rope to a rock.[7] Lastly, he might undertake certain magical performances in the water in order to impress the people with his superhuman powers.[8] In this connection Kauṭilya recognises the great value of propaganda when he provides a host of publicity officials for the dissemination of belief in the divinity of the king. As many as seven classes of officials, astrologers, soothsayers, horologists, Paurāṇikas (story-tellers), Īkṣaṇikas (probably a type of astrologers), spies and Sācivyakaras (companions of ministers) are to be pressed into the service of the state for the purpose. As the first four of these are mentioned elsewhere in the *Arthaśāstra*

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1. *vijigīṣu paragrāmamavāptukāmaḥ sarvajñadaivatasaṃyogakhyapanābhyāṃ svapaksaṃ uddharṣayet. parapaksaṃ ca udvjeayet. AŚ*, XIII. 1.

2. *sarvajṇakhyāpanam tu gṛhaguhyaprāvṛttijñāne mukhyānāṃ pratyādeśo kaṇṭaskaśodhanāpasarpāgamena prakāśanaṃ rājadviṣṭakāriṇaṃ. AŚ*, XIII. 1. Jolly's edn. the *AŚ*, p. 242, prefers *jñānena* in place of *jñāne*.

3. *AŚ*, XIII. 1; cf. Udayavīra Śāstri's edn., pt. II. p. 544.

4. *daivatasaṃyogakhyāpanaṃ tu suraṅgāmukhena agnicaityadaivatapratimā cchidrānupraviṣṭaiḥ agnicaityadaivatavyañjanaiḥ saṃbhāṣaṇaṃ pūjanaṃ ca. AŚ*, XIII. 1.

5. *AŚ*, XIII. 1.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

as members of the priestly class,[1] this testifies to the important role of the priests in moulding public opinion. They are to give wide publicity to the superhuman powers of the king throughout his territory. Similarly in foreign countries they are to spread the news of gods appearing before the king and of his having received from heaven the power of the sword (*daṇḍa*) and the power of the purse (*kośa*), the two important elements of the state. Further, they should make it known to the people of the enemy that the conqueror is capable of interpreting dreams and following the language of beasts and birds, and hence his victory is assured. Moreover, by means of a firebrand and the noise of drums from the sky the officials should convince the people of the impending defeat of their ruler.[2] A trick suggested by Kauṭilya is to damage the images of gods, from which blood may be caused to flow out in floods; spies may then represent this as an indication of defeat to the enemy.[3]

These ingenious measures intended for the propagation of the supernatural powers of the ruler, desirous of conquest, occur under the thirteenth book of the *Arthaśāstra*, which deals with the methods of capturing the capital (*durgalambhopāya*). Involving as they do numerous magical stratagems, these devices reveal that neither Kauṭilya himself believes in the genuineness of the royal divinity and omniscience nor does he want the ruler to subscribe to this nonsense. But he wants that nevertheless, by means of skilful propaganda carried on by a well-organized machinery, the masses should be impressed with the all-knowing and divine character of the conqueror, so that his own people might support him whole-heartedly in his aggressive designs, and those of the enemy might transfer their allegiance to the new conqueror. It is argued that such magical tricks and similar practices advocated at a few places in the *Arthaśāstra* are foreign to the work and in contradiction to the true character of Viṣṇugupta as we have it in the rest of the *Arthaśāstra* or in the drama

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1. *kārtāntikanaimittikamauhūrtikapaurāṇikasūtamāgadhāḥ purohitapuruṣāḥ sarvādhyakṣāśca sāhasrāḥ. AŚ*, V. 3.

2. *parasya viṣaye daivatadarśanaṃ divyakośadaṇḍotpattīṃ asya brūyuḥ. daivaapraśnanimittā vāyasāṅgavidyāḥ svapnamṛgapaksivyāhāresu cāṣya vijayaṃ brūyuḥ... AŚ*, XIII. 1.

3. *daivatapratimānāmabhyarhitānāṃ vā śoṇitena avasravam atimātraṃ kuryuḥ. tadanye devarudhirasaṃsrāve'tra śūravādiko' nyatamo vā draṣṭum āgacchet. AŚ*, XIII.2.

of the *Mudrārākṣasa*.[1] They appear to be the interpolation of a later period when Tantricism had grown into a craze in India. While the problem of distinguishing between the genuine and spurious in the *Arthaśāstra* has still to be solved, the apparent contradiction in Kauṭilya can be explained by presuming that he does not stop at any scruples for the sake of the state.

What has been stated above shows that a distinctive feature of the *Arthaśāstra* politics as expounded by Kauṭilya is the deliberate use of superstition by the ruling class to hoodwink and overawe the masses into allegiance to the state. Kauṭilya proposes several superstitious practices not only to deprive the people of their earnings but also to mobilise them for furthering the aggrandizing schemes of the conqueror and for destroying the enemy. The way in which Kauṭilya lays down these measures leaves no doubt that he does not believe in them but regards them as superstition. Since they exert tremendous hold on the minds of the masses, he turns them into an instrument for serving the interests of the state. Indeed he earnestly desires that the common people should put their faith in these superstitious practices. To achieve this object he proposes methods of organized persuasion and indirect coercion. Perhaps the most important function of the propaganda machinery of the Kauṭilyan state is to sow the seeds of illusion in the masses of the people about the supernatural powers of his ruler. Kauṭilya seems to have acted according to the principle that as a result of ceaseless and effective propaganda even falsehood can be made to appear as truth. If the people refuse to be credulous, they are to be subjected to practical indoctrination and physical torture at the hands of the agents of the king. The Kauṭilyan king should not believe in the performance of sacrifices or worship of gods, because whenever the occasion demands they are to be violated with impunity. Kauṭilya's attitude on the whole question can be perhaps summed up by stating that what is superstition for the ruler is true faith for the masses.

In times of distress (*āpaddharma*) the brāhmaṇical canons such as the *Manu Smṛti* and the *Śānti Parva* permit the ruler to override religious considerations. The latter, however, also recom-

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1. H. C. Seth, "The Spurious in Kauṭilya's AŚ," *A Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies presented to Professor F. W. Thomas*, p. 25.

mends the use of superstitious practices on the part of the king for misleading the people. In a section, in which Bhīṣma instructs the king to behave as a veritable opportunist, he lays down that a ruler desirous of wealth should pose as a religious pretender, appearing with a tuft of hair.[1] Clearly the measure is intended to capitalize on the superstitious beliefs of the masses in order to extort contributions from them. The difference between the *Śānti Parva* and Kauṭilya lies in the fact that the latter prescribes many other measures of this type.

This is, however, not to single out Kauṭilya as an exponent of superstitions in ancient politics, because it is precisely this idea which is to be found in *The Republic of Plato*, which propagates the lie and fiction that God placed gold in the philosophers, silver in the warriors, and brass and iron in the husbandmen and artisans.[2] He feels that it is not possible to pass this myth as fact among the masses in one generation, but they may be made to believe in the tale in the second, third and the succeeding generations.[3] Widely separated in point of distance, although not in point of time, Plato and Kauṭilya[4] give expression to the view that the ruling class should foster superstitions for the preservation and extension of its power. This view found favour also with the politicians in Rome. In spite of the influence acquired by the priestly colleges of Rome, "it was never forgotten—least of all in the case of those who held the highest position—that their duty was not to command, but to tender skilled advice.[5]" The Roman statesmen submitted to these transparent tricks rather from considerations of political expediency than from religious scruples; and the Greek Polybius might well say that "the strange and ponderous ceremonial of Roman religion was invented solely on account of the multitude which, as reason had no power over it, required to be ruled by signs and wonders'.[6] A similar trick was exercised by statesmen in early India and sometimes exposed by bold and penetra-

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1. *arthakāmaḥ śikhāṃ kuryāddharmadhvajopamām. ŚP*, 120. 9.
2. *The Republic* (Jowett's Tr.) , pp. 126-27.
3. Ibid.
4. The writer is inclined to agree with the theory that Kauṭilya was a contemporary of Candragupta Maurya.
5. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, i, 179, quoted in *SBE*, xii, pt. I, Introd., p. x.
6. Mommsen, op. cit., iii, 455, quoted in *SBE*, xii, pt. I, Introd., p.x.

ting thinkers. Thus Bāṇa had the temerity to reject the whole rigmorale of royal divinity as the work of sycophants who befuddled the minds of weak and stupid monarchs, but did not fool the strong and wise."[1]

We have assigned an independent section to superstition and politics in Kauṭilya in order to draw attention to a feature which has generally been ignored. But really we cannot draw any sharp line between the first and second sections of our study. Taken as a whole our examination of the relation between religion and politics in the *Arthaśāstra* reveals three major trends. First, basically the Kauṭilyan state upholds the brāhmaṇical ideology as set forth in the early law-books. But it would be wrong to think that it is obedient to an all-potent sacredotal authority, a characteristic which has been ascribed to the Indian mind in general.[2] For it disregards—this is the second trend and even suppresses those religious practices, brāhmaṇical or heretical, which undermine the authority of the state. Third, Kauṭilya seems to exploit the ignorance and superstition of the people, especially in external policy, for serving the ends of the state.

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1. Basham, *Wonder that was India*, pp. 86-87.
2. Sènart, *Caste in India*, p. 204.

Chapter XIV

THE SĀTAVĀHANA POLITY

The Sātavāhanas, who ruled over the Deccan, were equipped with all those material components which the Mauryas possessed in the earlier period in north India, namely the profuse use of coins and iron tools. What further distinguished their rule was the enormous trade with the Mediterranean region and the influx of the Roman coins coupled with the rise of urban settlements in the Deccan on a huge scale. All these created problems which had to be tackled.

A non-Aryan people with matrilineal traditions, the Sātavāhanas were one of the earliest Deccan dynasties to be brāhmaṇised. As new converts they came forward as the zealous champions of the varṇa system but were not opposed to Buddhism. Inscriptions represent them as the earliest rulers making grants in cash and land to the Buddhist monks and brāhmaṇas, which made both elements equally important in the Sātavāhana polity. Profiting from the experience of the Maurya rule the Sātavāhanas imposed themselves on fairly settled areas studded with several lesser princes and chieftains. The system of administration they evolved was native as opposed to the polity brought in by the Indo-Greeks, Śakas, Parthians and Kuṣāṇas.

The provenance of the Fourteen Rock Edicts and Minor Rock Edicts in Mysore and a fragment of the pillar inscription at Amarāvatī in Andhra clearly shows that the local princes were acquainted with the Aśokan system of government. Naturally some of its elements continued under the Sātavāhanas in the western Deccan. Like Aśoka the early Sātavāhana kings were called rājā. Although Gautamī Balaśrī, the mother of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, claims that her son and grandson were *mahārājas*,[1] actually this title is adopted neither by Gautamīputra nor by Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi ; these rulers did not assume those gandiloquent titles which distinguish the names of Kuṣāṇa

1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 86, l. 10.

princes. Further, the Sātavāhana kings conveyed their orders to subordinate officers called *amātyas*,—and not *kumāra*, *āryaputra*, or *mahāmātra* as in Aśoka's reign,—in the same idiom and in the same language Prakrit as were prevalent under Aśoka.

The Sātavāhana kingdom was divided into *āhāras* (literally 'food') or districts, as we find in the Aśokan system. *Āhāras* are not named in Aśokan inscriptions, whose findspots would place them in Madhya Pradesh and eastern U.P. But the Sātavāhana inscriptions frequently mention Govardhana-*āhāra* and some others. This administrative unit continued in the Vākāṭaka kingdom, and obtained in Mahārāṣṭra and Gujarat according to inscriptions of Gupta and post-Gupta times dated in the Kalacuri era.[1] A Sātavāhana epigraph of the first quarter of the third century A.D. suggests that the *āhāra* was indentical with the *janapada*[2], which is mentioned in both the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and Aśokan inscriptions. But the similarity in nomenclature may not imply the same size because the Aśokan *janapada*, consisting of probably 3200 villages according to Kauṭilya[3], was a far wider unit.

Mahāmātras, although rarely mentioned by Kauṭilya, formed under Aśoka a cadre of officers meant for multipurpose work. They also occur in Sātavāhana inscriptions, and in one case a *mahāmātra* seems to have been in charge of Buddhist monks,[4] thus roughly comparable to the *dhammahāmātra* of Aśoka. But clearly this institution was not so widespread and important in the Sātavāhana kingdom. The Sātavāhana substitute for the Aśokan *mahāmātra* seems to have been the *amātya* or *amaca* to whom all royal orders regarding gifts of land or caves are communicated. *Amātyas* appear as advisers or ministers in the Jātakas, but the most detailed information about them is available in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, in which they constitute a class of officers from which all other functionaries are recruited. Oddly enough this very important class of officers

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1. H. C. Raychaudhri thinks that the *āhāra* tends to disappear after the Sātavāhana age (G. Yazdani, ed., *The Early History of the Deccan*, Pts. I-IV, p. 45), but this is not supported by inscriptions.

2 ...*janapade sātavahaṇihāre*, *Sel. Inscrr.* II, no. 90, 1.2.

3. The *sthānīya* consisted of 800 villages (*AŚ*, II. 2. 1) and formed a part of the *janapada* (II. 2. 3), which was divided into four units for revenue purposes (II. 2. 34), and these may have been identical with *sthānīyas*.

4. Ibid., no. 75, ll. 1-2.

is not mentioned in Aśokan inscriptions. They figure for the first time in Sātavāhana inscriptions, which show that the post of the *amātya* was not hereditary, as was the case in Gupta times. We know of at least three persons, Viṣṇupālita[1], Śivadatta[2] and Śyāmaka,[3] who held this post within a period of 6 years at Govardhana in the reign of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi. Again in A.D. 152 in the reign of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi we hear of the *amātya* Śivaskandila working at the same place.[4] The names of these four officers working within a range of 28 years at the same place suggest that they did not even belong to one family. References to several other *amātyas* such as Parigupta probably under Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī[5], and Sateraka,[6] Sarvākṣadalana and Viṣṇupāli under Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śātakarṇī[7] do not disclose any hereditary pattern. A few inscriptions speak of the *rājāmātya*, but the *kumārāmātya* of Gupta times does not appear as yet. By and large the *amātyas* formed a predominant element in the Sātavāhana polity, and they enjoyed the same position in it as the *mahāmātras* in Aśokan and the *kumārāmātyas* in Gupta polity. As regards their functions there is nothing to show that they acted as advisers or ministers; at any rate they do not seem to have functioned as an organised body. On the other hand individually they did act in various capacities such as governors, treasurers and executors of land grants.

Several officers were connected with the writing of land charters. In one case the charter was drafted by an *amātya*, in another by a *pratīhāra* first mentioned under the Sātavāhanas, and in still another by a *mahāsenāpati*. This means that drafting was nots pecifically assigned to one officer, although in post-Gupta times it tended to be confined to the *sāndhivigrahika*. The Sātavāhanas also maintained keepers of land charters, known as *paṭṭikā-pālaka*[8] ? and engravers who inscribed the charters, and agents who conveyed them to the beneficiaries. But none

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 83, l. 2.
2. Ibid., l. 5.
3. Ibid., no. 84, l. 1.
4. Ibid., no. 87, l. 2.
5. *Luders List*, no. 1105.
6. Ibid., 994.
7. *Collected Works of R. G. Bhandarkar*, ii, 242.
8. The reading given by Sircar in *Sel. Inscrr.*, II. no. 87, 14 is *baṭika...kehi*, which he sanskritises as *paṭṭikāpalakaiḥ*.

of such Aśokan officers as *rājukas*, *prādeśikas*, *prativedikas*, *puruṣas*, *yuktas*, etc., find place in Sātavāhana inscriptions. If we go by this negative evidence the Sātavāhana state apparatus would appear to be rather simple.

Payment to Sātavāhana officers may have been made in cash—a practice recommended by the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and supported by the long list of various figures of *kārṣāpaṇas* given in the Nānāghat Cave Inscription of Nāganikā[1] and elsewhere. Such figures show that the cash fees given on the occasion of various sacrifices amounted to 148,000 and odd *kārṣāpaṇas*.[2] Cash payment is strongly corroborated by the numerous coins of lead, potin, copper and silver found mainly in Mahārāṣṭra although not so uncommon in Andhra and parts of Madhya Pradesh. Hoards of the Roman gold coins found in the Sātavāhana territory may have been used for largescale transactions or as bullion, but the Sātavāhana coins were apparently put to use in day-to-day transactions, including payment to royal officials. All this, however, does not preclude payment to officials in kind.

The fiscal system of the Sātavāhanas can be roughly inferred from revenue concessions in villages granted for religious purposes. Assessment was made in settled villages or cultivated land, whose mineral resources including salt belonged to the king. The state officials and police and soldiers could be billetted on the peasants either for their own maintenance or for the upkeep of the governmental machinery whose part they formed. The royal share of the produce is represented by such terms as *deya-meya*[3] and *bhoga*.[4] The king also received the *kārukara*,[5] which may mean taxes levied from artisans, and unless they worked for their chief (in this case Mahāraṭhī Vāsiṣṭhiputra Somadeva)[6] one day a month, as recommended by the Dharmaśāstras, they may have paid taxes in cash. Revenue seems to have been collected in both cash and kind. Actual finds of numerous coins of ordinary metal suggest that collection in cash

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 82.
2. G. Yazdani, ed., *The Early History of the Deccan*, Pts. I-VI. p. 134, fn. 2.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 85, l. 3.
4. Ibid., II, no. 86, l. 11.
5. Ibid., no. 85, l. 3.
6. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 85, l. 3.

was not slight. This is also supported by the use of the term *hairaṇyika*, keeper of gold, for treasurer.[1]

It is reasonable to look for the effects of the flourishing arts and crafts and increasing trade and commerce of the Deccan on the Sātavāhana political organisation. An inscription speaks of an overseer under whose supervision the craftsmen constructed a cave,[2] this class of overseers included monks, elders, merchants, etc., and were known variously as *navakarmika* and *uparakṣita*,[3] but whether they had to do anything with the state is not clear. The machinery through which the Sātavāhana rulers dealt with the various groups and types of artisans and merchants (*negamas*), so often mentioned in inscriptions, is not indicated. To be sure, they were free to make and form their guilds, with which even royal benefactors deposited endowment money.

A perusal of gifts to Buddhist monks and institutions mentioned in *Lüders' List* leaves the impression that in Bharhut and Sanchi most gifts were made by artisans and a class of merchants called *gandhikas*, from which the title *gāndhī* is derived. But the Nasik and Junnar cave inscriptions show that many individual gifts were recorded by merchants called *nekama* or *negama*, although *gandhikas*, *seṭhis* and *sathavahas* also figure as donors. If the merchants gave so liberally in the cause of religion the state would not permit them to be stingy is the cause of politics. Direct evidence on the royal income from artisans and merchants is little, but the use of the term *kāru-kara* would show that even artisans living in villages had to pay taxes. Ferry dues, which were remitted in some cases by Uṣabhadāta,[4] may have been mainly paid by merchants. Customs officers may have been appointed to look after custom-houses in various sea-ports of the Sātavāhana kingdom, but we have no means of finding out the real position.

Possibly the Sātavāhanas gave high government posts to merchants. The names of their *amātyas*, Śivagupta and Parigupta, would show them to be vaiśyas. Merchants seem to have been closely associated with the management of towns,

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1. *Lüders List*, no. 996, 1033; The expression *bhāṇḍākārikaya* occurs in no. 1141.
2. Ibid., 987.
3. Ibid.
4. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 59, l. 2.

whose number was evidently the largest in the Sātavāhana territory. Inscriptions mention Broach, Sopara, Kanheri, Kalyāṇa, Paithan, Tagara (Ter), Junnar, Karle, Govardhana, Nasik and Dhānyakaṭaka. Excavations reveal the existence of many other urban or semi-urban settlements. These are Maski, Brahmagiri, Chandravalli, Brahmapurī (Kolhapur), Jorwe, Kondapur, Bahal, Sangankullu, Amarāvatī, Nagarjunikonda, etc; we might include Arikamedu also. The Ariake Sadenon of Ptolemy, identifiable with the Sātavāhana kingdom, contained five ports and eighteen inland towns,[1] and in all likelihood many of these are covered by those mentioned in inscriptions or unearthed by excavations. While disclosing their identity the merchants seem to be more particular about stating the names of their towns than those of their parents. Several *negamas* state that they hailed from Kalyāṇa.[2] We also hear of a *negama* from Sopara,[3] a blacksmith from Kalyāṇa,[4] and also of a carpenter from Dhenukākaṭaka.[5] Some people merely call themselves *nigamaputra*, inhabitant of town. These instances are not exhaustive, but they clearly tell of the pride that artisans and merchants took in their cities and perhaps in their civic life to which they contributed their mite. Numerous examples of this type demonstrate that to the merchants town or territorial affiliations were of far more moment than tribal or family identities.

At least some of these towns were managed by the *nigamasabhā*, in which Uṣabhadāta proclaimed and got registered his deed of gift according to custom.[6] Sometimes the inhabitants of a town made donations as a corporate body, and there are several references to the gifts made by the town of Dhānyakaṭaka in Amarāvatī sculptures.[7] Members of the *nigamasabhā* were apparently merchants, although some *gahapatis* also served in

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1. *JAHRS*, xxii (1952-54), 69.
2. *Lüders List*, nos, 1000-1, 1024, etc.
3. No. 995.
4. No. 1032.
5. No. 1092.
6. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 58, l. 4.
7. C. Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum* (*Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum*, N. S. General Section, IV, Madras, 1956), 275, 285.

this capacity.[1] The popular element in local administration has been underlined by several writers. What needs emphasis is that perhaps at no other time in ancient history do epigraphic records and excavations reveal so many towns in the Deccan, especially in Mahārāṣṭra, as in the first two centuries of the Christian era. Apparently merchants did not participate in civic life on such a scale in ancient India as they did in the Deccan during this period. With the evidence from the guilds of traders and artisans, commonly mentioned as *seni* or *śreṇi* and *nikāya* in inscriptions,[2] the whole thing adds up to an unprecedented burgeoning of civic life under the Sātavāhana rule. In what relation did the guilds of traders and artisans stand to the *nigamasabhā* is unknown, and so is the nature of the relation between the guilds and the state. But evidently the guilds constituted a great source of economic stability to the king and may have helped him in the administration of towns. Curiously enough such merchant bodies are not heard of under the successors of the Sātavāhanas till the end of the sixth century A.D.

Another element that did not survive the end of the Sātavāhana rule for long is that of matrilineal inheritance, which can be inferred from metronymics and other similar traces. Gupta and post-Gupta kings are represented as devoted to the feet of father (*pitṛ-pādānudhyāta*), but Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi is described as one who rendered uninterrupted service to his mother (*avipanamātususuka*)[3]. It is significant that Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi,[4] Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śātakarṇi, Gautamīputra Śri-Vijaya Śātakarṇi and Gautamīputra Śri-Yajña Śātakarṇi do not mention their father's names, which is in sharp contrast to the Gupta practice in north India where princes make it a point to refer to their father and also describe their exploits, real or imaginary, with gusto.

Since Simuka and Kṛṣṇa, the earliest Sātavāhana kings known from inscriptions, appear without metronymics, it has been thought that matriarchal practices appeared in the Sāta-

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1. V. S. Bakhle, "Sātavāhanas and the contemporary Kṣatrapas", *JBBRAS*, N. S., iv, 57 quoted in the *Early History of the Deccan*, pts. I-IV, p. 135.
2. *Lüders' List*, nos. 1137, 1180, 1133, 1165.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 86, l. 4.
4. Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi however, donated a village 'out of love for his father'. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 86, l. 11.

vāhana dynasty later. But the stratigraphical position in which the coins of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Viḷivāyakura, Māḍharīputra Sivalakura and Gautamīputra Viḷivāyakura have been found at Brahmapurī in Kolhapur district in Mahārāṣṭra[1] attests that the matriarchal practices prevailed in the Deccan even before the advent of the Sātavāhanas. This also obtained among the Mahāraṭhīs, who were the contemporaries and vassals of the Sātavāhanas. Metronymics were common even among the ordinary folk, as would appear from the name of the household (*gṛhapati*) Kaunta (apparently son of Kuntī) Sāmba.[2] Matrilineal inheritance seems to be the likely explanation of the metronymics, and since in the dynastic rule the state was a larger version of the family the same system of inheritance prevailed there. The exact mode of succession in the Sātavāhana dynasty cannot be determined, but metronymics suggest that princes did not owe their throne to their father. Among the Nayar community property inherited by the daughter is managed by her brother and failing him by her son. Probably this analogy applies to the case of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, who evidently looked after the kingdom inherited by his mother. Occasionally the queen asserted her legal rights, as she did in the 24th year of her son's reign when she directly conveyed her orders to the governor of Govardhana regarding the grant of a field. Only the rightful occupant of the throne could function in this manner, for in Aśokan or in other Sātavāhana inscriptions orders were sent to the governors only by the king.

The long and impressive list of Vedic sacrifices performed by Nāganikā is an indication of the matriarchal influence over the Vedic and brahmaṇical patriarchal tradition which did not permit sacrifices to women. The argument that she did it in company with her royal consort[3] is based on a forced reading of the inscription. The exalted religious status, which involved huge gifts in villages, money and animals[4] and consequently an immense drain on royal treasury, undoubtedly reflects the high

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1. P. L. Gupta, "Coins from Brahmapuri Excavations (1945-46)", *The Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, vol. 21, pp. 45-47.
2. *Sel. Inscr.*, II, no. 90, l. 3.
3. D. C. Sircar, *Sel. Inscrr.*, (2nd edn.), p. 97, fn. 1.
4. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 82.

political position of the Queen Nāganikā, whose image seems to have been put up publicly. Although the two queens Nāganikā and Gautamī Balaśrī[1] give their antecedents in full, their land grants are not endorsed by the king. These queens held villages not as maintenance grants, as under the Cāhamānas, but probably as portions of matrilineal inheritance.

Wives of the officials and vassals of the Sātavāhanas bore the administrative designations held by their husbands, which shows that they claimed similar prestige and influence; the titles *mahāsenāpatnī*[2] and *mahātalavārī*[3] bear witness to this. We have also the peculiar example of a woman doorkeeper who drafted a land charter.[4] All these facts are sufficient to demonstrate the important role of women in the Sātavāhana system of government.

Although mothers of kings are mentioned in Gupta records, except for Prabhāvatī, the daughter of Candra Gupta II who acted as regent in the Vākāṭaka kingdom, none played any noticeable part in administration. Obviously the Sātavāhana legacy did not make any serious impression on the Gupta or post-Gupta system of government, although women played an important part in administration in early mediaeval Orissa.

But several elements in the Sātavāhana polity proved to be durable. We may begin with the supernatural and superhuman attributes assigned to Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi. He is compared in prowess and lustre to some legendary figures and supernatural forces such as Rāma, Keśava, Arjuna, Bhīma, Nābhāga, Nahuṣa, Janamejaya, Sagara, Yayāti, Ambarīṣa, Pavana, Garuḍa, Siddha, Yakṣa, Rākṣasa, Vidyādhara, Bhūta, Gandharva, Cāraṇa, Candra, Divākara and planets.[5] This analogy tends to bring out divine aspects of kingship, which come out prominently in the epigraphic descriptions of Gupta kings.

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1. Ibid., no. 86.
2. Ibid., no. 89. l. 2.
3. Ibid., no. 98, l. 9; it is an Ikṣvāku inscription of the second half of the third century A. D.
4. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 84, l. 6; based on the reading of D. C. Sircar and his fn. 1 on p. 201 in the second edn.
5. *Sel. Inscr.*, II, no. 86, ll. 7-9

The Sātavāhana political functionaries provide one of the earliest instances of the use of the title *mahā* or great, which came to be widely associated with the designations of the Gupta princes and officials and feudatories. The Sātavāhana kings call themselves rājā, although the term *mahārāja* is mentioned in their inscriptions. There occur other designations such as *mahāsenāpati*, *mahāraṭhī*, *mahābhoja*, *mahātalavāra*, etc, which are considered to be the epithets of the feudatories of the Sātavāhanas. Some feudatories such as the Mahāraṭhīs not only bore metronymics like the Sātavāhanas but also enjoyed hereditary status,[1] enabling them to issue coins[2] and grant villages in their own rights.[3] Some of these titles are found among the Ikṣvākus, Cuṭus, Viṣṇukuṇḍins, etc., and also among some branches of the Sātavāhanas, who were evidently the feudatories of the main branch. The use of the prefix *mahā* introduces graded and unequal relationships and marks the beginning of the titles which became popular in feudal hierarchy in the early mediaeval period.

But the significant element, which was adumberated later, in the Sātavāhana system was the rural administration in which people were committed either to the care of police and soldiers or of religious beneficiaries. In the rural areas there is no indication of any popular element, as has been sometimes thought.[4] On the basis of Hāla's *Gāthā Sattasai* it has been suggested that the jurisdiction of the *gramaṇī* extended to five or even ten villages.[5] But the mention of the term *rahaṭṭaghaḍiya* in Chapter V of that text would suggest that it was compiled some time in the ninth century A.D. when the Persian device of *araghaṭṭa* irrigation is mentioned in northern inscriptions. Although many villages are named in connection with the religious gifts of the Sātavāhanas, their headmen and elders do not come in for notice as they do in later charters. On the strength of an inscription of the first quarter of the third century A.D.[6] it has been suggested that the village was managed by

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 85, ll. 2-3.
2. P. L. Gupta, *The Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, vol. 21, 42-45.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 85, ll. 2-3.
4. G. Yazdani, ed., *Early History of the Deccan*, pts. I-IV, p. 135.
5. Ibid.
6. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 90.

the *gāmika* or *grāmika*, but the crucial term seems to be *gumika*, the Prakrit form of *gaulmika*.[1] This fits the context in which the *gaulmika* Kumāradatta is represented as subordinate to the *mahasenāpati* Skandanāga who held charge of Sātavāhaṇihāra. A century later a Pallava copper-plate charter from the same area includes the *gumika* or *gaulmika* in the list of royal officers to whom the grant is addressed.[2] The *gaulmika*[3] was head of a *gulma* consisting, according to the sources of the first four centuries of the Christian era, of 9 *pattis*, amounting to 9 chariots, 9 elephants, 27 horse and 45 foot in all.[4] Most probably chariots had gone out of use in war at this stage, but it is evident that the *gulma* was army platoon. Manu states that the *gulma* should be stationed in the midst of two, three, five or hundred villages.[5] These police-cum-military contingents obviously lived off the countryside, where they were the chief symbols of royal power. The earliest evidence for this development appears in Bellary district, south of the Krishna in Mysore, during the third century A.D. and may not be true of the earlier period and the western Deccan, to which most of the early Sātavāhana inscriptions belong. Even in the second century A.D. the *mahāsenāpati* performed some civil functions such as drafting land charters,[6] but it is not known whether he held charge of large territorial units. Sukthankar suggests that these military officers were feudal lords of the lands, holding them as *jagirs*. This may or may not be true, but the practice of having military officers as governors is in sharp contrast with the administration of the Aśokan *janapada* which was placed under a high civil functionary called *rājuka*. No doubt Aśoka was obsessed with the problem of maintaining peace among the frontier peoples, but he did not place them under military rule.

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1. *EI*, XIV, 155, fn. 5.
2. Ibid., III, no. 65, l. 5.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 90, l. 3. D. C. Sircar reads *gamika*, but Sukthankar suggests *gumika- gaulmika* (*EI*, XIV, 155, fn. 5). This is accepted by D. D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 276.
4. *Mbh.* I. 2. 15-17 & *Amarakośa*. II. 8. 10-11 quoted in Kosambi, op. cit., 276.
5. VII. 114.
6. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II. no. 87, l. 4.

That coercive elements are prominent in the Sātavāhana rural administration can also be made out from the nature of concessions granted to religious beneficiaries. Gifts of both cultivated fields and villages are rendered free from molestation and entry of policemen and soldiers and also from the interference of royal officials. Since the charters pay chief attention to these privileges and not to taxes from whose payment the beneficiary was exempted, they create the impression that royal police, soldiers, retainers and officials freely operated in the rural areas and formed an effective agency of exploitation. The practice was continued with vigour by the Vākāṭakas, who clearly enumerated the provisions that the villagers had to supply to various types of royal retainers, and became a general feature of early mediaeval polity in the countryside.

The military character of the Sātavāhana rule is also evident from their common use of such terms aś *kaṭaka* and *skandhāvāra*, meaning military camps. It seems that every *āhāra* had its *kaṭaka* ; the situation of Benakaṭaka in Govardhana[1]-*āhāra* is an example, although Dhenukākaṭaka or Dhānyakaṭaka may have held a similar position in another *āhāra*. The Sātavāhanas originated the practice of issuing land charters from victory camps, which became widespread in early mediaeval times.

Land grants formed a significant trait of the Sātavāhana rural administration. Inscriptions show that the Sātavāhana started the practice of granting fiscal and administrative immunities to brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks. Perhaps the earlier epigraphic grant of land is found in the Nānāghat Cave Inscription of Nāganikā, who bestowed villages (*grāma*) on priests for officiating at Vedic sacrifices,[2] but it does not speak of any concessions in this context. These appear first in grants made by Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi in the first quarter of the second century A.D. and include the surrender of royal rights to the procurement of salt from cultivated fields, which in actual practice may not have been found in every field. What is further important is that royal officials,—apparently policemen, retainers, and soldiers,—are asked not to interfere with the administration of the donated field or village, which is thus left completely in the hands of religious beneficiaries.

1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 83, l. 1. 2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 82.

The Sātavāhana inscriptions of the second century A.D. speak of exemptions of all kinds granted to the beneficiaries by using the phrase *sarva-jāti-parihāra*.[1] *Parihāra* in the sense of royal charter is defined by Kauṭilya as an act of royal favour done to special castes, towns, villages or countries.[2] In the sense of remission of taxes it is recommended for cultivators in new settlements,[3] and for sailors and merchants[4] in special cases; remission for five years is also prescribed for those who renovate irrigation works.[5] In the *Arthaśāstra* we hear of villages which enjoyed remissions[6] and also of royal favourites who lived on such remissions.[7] Kauṭilya's main objective in recommending *parihāra* is purely secular, to eventually augment royal resources. But the Sātavāhana inscriptions speak only of *parihāras* granted for religious reasons, and specify only four or five[8] items from which immunity was granted. Eighteen items (*aṣṭādaśajāti-parihāra*) are mentioned separately in a fourth century A.D. Pallava inscription[9] which refers to their prevalence in the Sātavāhana *rāṣṭra*;[10] but we are not quite sure whether the peasants were subjected to all these impositions from the early third century A.D. when this area was occupied by the Sātavāhanas.

Nor was the transfer of fiscal and administrative rights made absolute and permanent. A village granted to one set of Buddhist monks seems to have been taken away and granted to another set by Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi.[11] Further, Gautamī-putra seems to have resumed the grant of a field from the monks on the ground that it was not being cultivated and the village was not being inhabited. Instead of this the monks were granted another piece of land on the boundary of the town.[12] In any case perpetual grants of land were not made in the

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1. Ibid., no. 83, l. 4.
2. *AŚ*, II. 10.
3. Ibid., II. 1.
4. Ibid., II. 16.
5. Ibid., III. 9.
6. Ibid., II. 35.
7. Ibid., II. 37.
8. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no-83, ll. 3-4.
9. Ibid., III, no. 65, ll. 31-36.
10. Ibid., l. 27.
11. Ibid., II, no. 87, ll. 2-4.
12. Ibid., no. 84, ll. 3-5.

Sātavāhana kingdom. Although we hear of the *akṣayanīvi*[1] tenure, yet at this stage it implied the inexhaustible character of the benefice and not its grant in perpetuity.

Evidently the Sātavāhanas supplemented the coercive method of maintaining their authority in the countryside by grants to monks and priests. The Buddhist monks, who seem to have been one of the earliest landed beneficiaries according to inscriptions, must have preached peace and rules of good conduct, obviating the occasions for defiance of the royal authority and social order. A similar service may have been rendered by the brāhmaṇas, who would be interested in enforcing the rules of the varṇa system. In an inscription Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi is called the sole brāhmaṇa and credited with the prevention of the fusion of four varṇas. The Sātavāhanas seem to have been improvised brāhmaṇas, which accounts for their zealous support of the brāhmaṇical order. Perhaps all the four varṇas mentioned in the Sātavāhana inscriptions were not equally well established in their dominions, and in actual practice royal task may have been confined to the disciplining of the śūdras, although Gautamīputra claims to have disgraced the kṣatriya princes. The role which this king takes upon himself is commended to the king by Kauṭilya. Later this claim is made in inscriptions by Gupta kings, Harṣavardhana and others. But the royal responsibility for maintaining the existing social order and thus contributing to political stability was first stressed by the Sātavāhanas.

The picture of the Sātavāhana political organisation that emerges from this study is incomplete. We do not have any information about their judicial system, very little about their civil administration, and not enough about their fiscal and military system. Inscriptions of the second and third centuries show that their kingdom was divided into *āhāras* and *grāmas* in hierarchical order to which would correspond the official hierarchy of *āmātya* or *mahāsenāpati*, and *gaulmika*. The two later officials as heads of territorial units appear in the third century A.D. in Bellary district. Hence it is difficult to visualise this neat territorial arrangement uniformly for the whole period and kingdom of the Sātavāhanas. Numerous epigraphic refer-

1. Ibid., no. 87, l. 2.

ences suggest that the Sātavāhana polity was sustained by monks and merchants, but we cannot assess their exact contribution to administration. Probably the first preached peace in return for the rich grants they received, and the second provided the necessary resources for these and other expenses of the state.

Not the least striking feature of the Sātavāhana rule was its coercive, military character, which can be derived from the importance attached to freedom from visits of the police and soldiers to the countryside and from the names of such administrative functionaries as *mahāsenāpati* and *gaulmika*.

The Sātavāhana system of administration appears to be a significant link between the Mauryas and Guptas, and between the North and the South. The Sātavāhanas retained a few elements of the Aśokan administration, but they introduced several important ones which were continued by the Vākāṭakas and Guptas. The role played by women and merchants in their government did not last long, but the practice of placing rural districts under military rule and granting fiscal and administrative immunities spread both northward and southward. In this respect the Pallava system of administration was the southward extension of the Sātavāhana legacy. It retained the *gulma* system of government as well as the practice of granting exemptions, which now covered a very wide range comprising eighteen *parihāras* in the fourth and as many as thirty-five in the sixth century.

CHAPTER XV

THE KUṢĀṆA POLITY

The basic facts that formed the background of the Kuṣāṇa polity were the expansion of trade and the problems created by foreign occupation. The Kuṣāṇa dominions extended from the Aral sea to the Ganges, and Indian merchants profited from silk trade carried on the silk route passing through the Kuṣāṇa empire in Central Asia. The first Indian gold coins issued by the Kuṣāṇas owed much to the supply of gold from Central Asia. What is more important, they issued the largest number of copper coins which must have affected at least the urban economy and added to the importance of artisans and merchants.

Attempts have been made to read foreign influence in the Maurya polity, but this exercise should prove more fruitful in the study of the Kuṣāṇa polity. The Scythians brought in ideas of kingship and administration from Central Asia and China and tried them on foreign soil in India. Foreign rulers as they were, their high officers had to be their compatriots, and they had to evolve some kind of feudatory organisation for the government of the newly conquered lands in which the military element had to be given an important place.

After more than two centuries of disintegration following the fall of the Maurya empire the Kuṣāṇas restored the partial political unity of northern India and maintained it for about more than a century. But the Kuṣāṇa political organization did not possess that rigid centralisation which characterised the Maurya administrative machinery. Inscriptions and, to some extent, coins, which form the chief source of our study of the Kuṣāṇa polity, do not indicate numerous state officials, who are known from the epigraphs of Aśoka and the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. The one striking difference between the Maurya and the Kuṣāṇa rulers is the use of grandiloquent titles by the latter. In the beginning Kujūla Kadphises, the founder of the Kuṣāṇa power in India, is described as a small chief (*yavuga*), but, with the expansion of their power, he and other Kuṣāṇa

rulers use such titles as *mahārāja*, *rājātirāja*.[1] Both these titles were used by the Parthian[2] rulers Gondopharnes and Azilises, who flourished in the first half of the first century A.D.[3], although in comparison with the Kuṣāṇa successors their power was very limited. The earliest epigraphic mention of the title *mahārāja* is to be found in the first century B.C. Hāthigumphā Inscription of Khāravela, where his ancestor Mahāmegha-vāhana is described as *mahārāja*[4], although coins show the use of this term for Indo-Greek Kings of earlier times. But the title *rājātirāja*, although Indian in form, was of foreign extraction and was apparently derived by the Kuṣāṇas from their Parthian predecessors, who adopted it from the Achaemenians. The first Parthian king to use the title 'King of Kings' was Mithridates II, 123-88 B. C.[5] This seems to have been imitated by the Śaka chief Maues[6] after 88 B. C., and was also used by the Parthian rulers now and then. A Jain text, the *Kālakācāryakathānaka*, which seems to contain genuine traditions about the first appearance of the Śakas in India,[7] uses the prakritised form *rāyāhirāya* in the case of a Śaka sāhi.[8] Since lesser rulers such as the Śaka, and especially the Parthian, styled themselves as *rājātirāja* and *mahārāja*, these titles should not be taken to betoken greater royal authority. This also applies to the case of the Kuṣāṇas. Undoubtedly Aśoka's empire was far wider and his authority far stronger, yet he remained satisfied with the simple title of *rājā*. Therefore these Kuṣāṇa titles perhaps betray a tendency towards decentralisation rather than the real exaltation of royal authority, as has been suggested by some scholars.[9] Such titles take notice of the existence of lesser kings and chiefs who stood in the relation of feudatories to the sovereign power, for the king is called *mahārāja* or the great king in relation to other kings (*rājās*), who do not enjoy that position. Similarly he is called *rājātirāja* or the supreme king of kings in relation to other subordi-

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 51, l. 2; cf. p. 124.
2. Ibid., II, no. 29, l. 1.
3. Ibid., II, no. 23, l. 1.
4. L. 1.
5. CII, ii, pt. I, p. xxix.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., pp. xxvi-ii.
8. Ed. H. Jacobi, *ZDMG*, 1880, verse 62
9. Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 5th edn. p. 518; Ghoshal, *The Mauryas and Sātavāhanas* p. 344.

nate kings in his kingdom. Thus these titles indicate a feudatory organization consisting of tributary states or chiefs.

The rulers belonging to the Kaniṣka group generally prefixed to their names a title ṣāhi.[1] The title appears as *shaonano shao* on the coin-legends of Kaniṣka and his successors.[2] The sanskritised form of the title, *ṣāhānuṣāhi*, appeared in the famous Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta. Although this epithet was ultimately derived from the Persian source, we are not certain about the intermediary from whom the Kuṣāṇa rulers adopted this title. Since the title on the coin-legends is written in pure Khotanī Śaka language[3] and ascribed in its prakritised form, *sāhāṇusāhi*, to the Śakas by the *Kālakācārya-kathānaka*,[4] most probably the Kuṣāṇas adopted it from their Śaka predecessors, whom they supplanted in the area near about Mohenjo-daro. The administrative and political significance of this title can be brought out from the context in which it is used in the above-mentioned Jain text. It informs us[5] that the Jain teacher, Kālaka, whose sister was abducted by Gardabhilla, King of Ujjayinī, went to the *Śaka Kula*. There the feudatories (*sāmanta*) were called *sāhi* and their overlord (*sāmantāhivai*) *sāhāṇusāhi*. Kālaka stayed with one of the sāhis, and as this chief together with ninety-five other sāhis fell into disgrace with the *sāhāṇusāhi*, he induced them to proceed to Saurāṣṭra, which they divided among themselves. When the autumn came, the Jain teacher led them on to Ujjayinī, where Gardabhilla was made a prisoner. A sāhi was established as overking (*rāyāhirāya*), and this led to the establishment of the Śaka dynasty. This story reveals three distinct elements in the Śaka polity, which seem to have been adopted by the Kuṣāṇas. First, the ṣāhis were not independent kings who had been subjugated but chiefs who stood in the relation of feudatories to the great lord (*sāmantāhivai*). Secondly, the ṣāhis belonged to the same tribe as the *ṣāhāṇuṣāhi*, and, hence the overlord was only the first among the equals. Thirdly, as a natural corollary to this the allegiance of the ṣāhis to their overlord rested on a slender basis, and at the

1. *Lüders' List* nos. 21 69a, 72, 149a, 161; *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 49, l. 10.
2. *CCIM*, i, 69, 75-79, 84.
3. *CII*, ii, pt. I, p. liii.
4. *ZDMG*, 1880, p. 262, lines 33-36.
5. Ibid., p. 267 ff.

slightest provocation they could withdraw their fealty from him and seek their fortunes independently. We have some information about the nature of the obligations of the ṣāhis towards their overlord. In A. D. 90 the Yue-chi sent their viceroy Sie, according to M. Sylvain Lévi a *ṣāhi*, to attack Pan-chao, who, however, succeeded in defeating him.[1] This shows that to render military aid to the overlord was an important obligation of the ṣahi. Unfortunately the existing data neither mention the names of the lesser rājās, ṣāhis, etc., nor indicate the nature of their relations with their Kuṣāṇa overlord. But for a conquering minority from outside the feudatory organization was apparently a suitable form of political system.

The feudatory character of the Kuṣāṇa political system can also be inferred from some other titles. Thus the title *mahīśvara* adopted by Wema Kadphises II[2] means the great lord. The title *sarvaloka-īśvara*[3] means the lord of the whole world. Although these titles were not adopted by the Kaniṣka group of Kuṣāṇa rulers, they were different in spirit. Significantly enough the generally prevalent Kuṣāṇa titles such as *rājātirāja* and *ṣāhi* were not adopted by indigenous rulers, but the term *īśvara* associated with the titles of the Kadphises group came to be common with post-Gupta rulers, who styled themselves as *parmeś-vara*, the supreme lord.

At one stage the Kusāṇas were influenced by the Roman system of administration inasmuch as Kaniṣka adopted the title of *Kaiser*[4], which was obviously used to challenge the Roman power. But this was a superficial imitation. They were not influenced by the Roman system of provincial administration, which was an important Roman achievement. The Kuṣāṇas could not evolve any sound provincial system either on Maurya or Roman lines. It is doubtful whether they exercised any direct administrative control over any sizable part of their territories. The Sārnāth Buddhist Image Inscription of the year 3 of Kaniṣka I (A.D. 81 ?)[5] refers to the rule of two kṣatrapas Vanaspara and Kharapallāna, ruling over the easternmost province, including

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1. Quoted in *CII*, ii. pt. I, p. lxxii.
2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 31, l. 1.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., II, no. 51, ll. 1-2.
5. Ibid., II, no. 37, ll. 1-10.

the Banaras region of Kaniṣka's empire.[1] That there prevailed the system of dual kingship in some parts of northern India in earlier times is known from Greek and Jain sources. But the Kuṣāṇas seem to have introduced the curious practice of dual governorship in a province. Apparently it was intended that one kṣatrapa would act as a check on the power of the other. But probably Vanaspara and Kharapallāna could not remain on the same footing for long, since in another inscription the former is mentioned as a *kṣatrapa* and the latter as a *mahākṣatrapa*.[2] What led to this change is difficult to say. Perhaps this was more in keeping with the hierarchical organization in the feudatory system than with the equal position of the two kṣatrapas. The *mahākṣatrapa* (the great satrap) was made, as it were, the overlord of the *kṣatrapa*, who assisted him in the work of administration. The names of Vanaspara and Kharapallāna clearly show that they were foreigners. It is suggested that they were the descendants of the *mahākṣatrapa* Ṣoḍāsa of Mathurā and retained in their position by the Kuṣāṇas.[3] If we accept this suggestion, it would mean that even the kṣatrapas were not directly appointed by the Kuṣāṇa king but were reinstated in their position as vanquished chiefs. This may have been true in some cases; in other cases the kṣatrapas may have been appointed directly. At any rate it is clear that generally the scions of the ruling family were appointed to this post; thus in one case the son of a mahārāja was appointed a kṣatrapa, probably in north-western India.[4] We have no exact idea of the number of satrapies in the Kuṣāṇa empire. It has been suggested that the empire was divided into five, perhaps seven, satrapies.[5] But we do not know how long and how regularly this division functioned, nor can we easily classify these satrapies into any well-defined categories.

Inscriptions do not give us sufficient idea about the functions of the kṣatrapas. As individuals they erected images of the Buddha as Vanaspara and Kharapallāna did,

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1. Ibid., fn. 4.
2. Ibid., II, no. 38, ll. 1-2.
3. S. K. Chattopadhyaya, *Early History of Northern India*, p. 84.
4. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 36, l. 2.
5. B. N. Puri, "Provincial and Local Administration in the Kuṣāṇa Period", *Proc. IHC*, 1945, p. 64.

or established several relics of the Buddha as in the case of Kṣatrapa Veśpasi[1], who had appointed a donation master for the purpose. Except this they do not throw any light on the civil functions of the kṣatrapa as a governor. The analogy of the Achaemenian satraps,[2] who were the predecessors of the Parthian and Kuṣāṇa satraps, might not help much, for the Kuṣāṇas were separate in point of time from the Persians by about five centuries. Nevertheless, as can be inferred from the designation *grāmasvāmī* (lord of the villages) of a kṣatrapa in a late Kharoṣṭhī inscription of the Peshawar area,[3] probably the officer acted as an intermediary between the village headman on the one hand and the king on the other, perhaps collecting royal dues from the villages.[4] That this particular kṣatrapa enjoyed considerable personal influence verging on independence of his sovereign (*mahārāja*) can be deduced from the fact that a novice paid homage to him by erecting a *saṅghārāma* and *stūpa* in his honour[5], in the same manner as many people honoured the Kuṣāṇa *mahārājas* by making religious donations for the spiritual well-being of these rulers.[6]

The military system of the Kuṣāṇas is not reflected in their records. The frequent use of the term *daṇḍanāyaka* in its different forms in their inscriptions suggests the importance of the military element in their polity. But how far they changed the character of the conventional fourfold Indian army has yet to be found out. Undoubtedly they were skilled horsemen using stirrups, which, judging from the sculptures of the period, were introduced by the Scythians. In this period horses were sent from India to China, and a Han law said that those who used horses must use trousers, which practice was true of the Indian Kuṣāṇas. The Mathura statue of Kaniṣka clearly shows that boots and trousers formed the essential equipment of the Kuṣāṇa horsemen who seem to have been good archers. Unfortunately we

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1. *Sel. Inscrr*, II, no. 43, ll. 2-4.
2. Herodotus, *The Histories* (Penguin), pp. 214-15.
3. *EI*, xxiv, p. 10.
4. There may be another possible interpretation of the title *grāmasvāmī* applied to this *kṣatrapa*. Perhaps in return for his services he was remunerated by the grant of a village by his suzerain. But we have no corroborative evidence for this.
5. *EI*, xxiv, p. 10.
6. Infra, p. 233.

have information neither about the strength of the Kuṣāṇa army nor about its organisation and distribution.

The kṣtrapas exercised their powers through semi-military officers known as *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, who seem to have occupied an important position in the Kuṣāṇa polity. During the reign of Kaniṣka we hear of *daṇḍanāyaka* Lala, who served Kṣatrapa Veśpasi as his donation master.[1] This military officer was a scion of the ruling family, for he is described as "the increaser of the Kuṣāṇa race.[2]" Besides, a Mathurā inscription apparently ascribable to Kuṣāṇa times mentions a *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Vālina.[3] Another Mathurā inscription mentions a *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, whose son served under Huviṣka.[4] Still another Mathurā inscription of the fourth year of Kaniṣka refers to *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Hummiyaka Caṅyakka, whose name was given to a Buddhist monastery.[5] Some of these references might suggest that these officers were sometimes associated with non-military functions also, but under foreign rule their military duties may have been far more important. It is difficult to accept the view that the *daṇḍanāyaka* was a feudatory chief who rendered civil and military aid to the king.[6] Apparently this interpretation has been suggested to account for the military, magisterial and judicial functions attributed to this office by different authorities. But all these could well have been performed by a royal officer under foreign rule at a time when there was not much separation of functions. It is likely that in course of time the military and coercive aspect of this office receded into the background, and its judicial aspect came to the forefront. It is this which explains its meaning as judge or rod-applier in later lexicons. Thus just as on the civil side, if we may so call it, we hear of *rājā* and *mahārāja*, *kṣatrapa* and *mahākṣatrapa*, on the military side we hear of *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*,

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1. *CII*, ii, pt. I, no. 76, ll. 2-3. For various interpretations of the term *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* see Ghoshal, *Indian Historiography and other Essays*, pp. 177-79. Ghoshal rightly concludes that the term *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* means commander-in-chief. Ibid., p. 179.
2. *CII*, ii, pt. I, no. 76, l. 2.
3. *Lüders' List*, no. 60.
4. *JRAS*, 1924, p. 402, l. 5.
5. K. D. Bajpai, *Proc. IHC*, 1958, p. 68, l. 2.
6. B. N. Puri, *India under the Kushāṇas*, p. 84.

a feature which seems to be in tune with the prevalent hierarchy. Thus the names of the Kuṣāṇa functionaries do not suggest any territorial or functional associations, as we find in the case of Maurya officials, but indicate a graded hierarchy of the same type of officers, the one being superior and the other subordinate. How royal officers were paid is nowhere stated. Possibly they received salaries in cash, as can be inferred from cash donations made for feeding the brāhmaṇas and from the use of gold and copper coins on a large scale in the Kuṣāṇa dominions. Further, since the Kuṣāṇas had a small administrative establishment, this payment would not have been difficult.

As regards territorial units of administration under the Kuṣāṇas, the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta speaks of *viṣaya* and *bhukti* in their dominions.[1] The prevalence of the *bhukti* is not corroborated by any source and hence may have been a projecion of Gupta units into Kauṣāṇa times, but that of the *viṣaya* is attested by a Buddhist Mahāyānist text of the third century A.D., which, while defining a *devaputra*, refers to kings ruling in *viṣayas*.[2] In the post-Maurya and Gupta inscriptions such units are generally mentioned in connection with land grants, which have not been found so far in the case of the Kuṣāṇa kings. We have practically no information about urban administration in the Kuṣāṇa dominions. Although literary evidence for the existence of guilds in north-eastern India can be inferred from early Pāli texts and certainly from Buddhist texts of post-Maurya times, we get the earliest epigraphic evidence in Kuṣāṇa times. Four seals of the Kuṣāṇa period from Bhīṭā speak of the *nigama*,[3] and an inscription refers to two guilds (*śreṇis*), of which one was that of wheat-flour dealers, at Mathurā.[4] The two Mathurā guilds, which received endowments in cash for feeding the brāhmaṇas, were surely capable of taking care of their members and possibly of managing the affairs of the town. Though inscriptions do not refer to as many guilds in northern India as in western India and

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1. Lines 23-24.
2. *JA*, 1934, p. 3.
3. *ASR*, 1911-12, p. 56.
4. *Sel. Inscrr.*, BK II, no. 49, ll. 12-13.

the Deccan, they undoubtedly mark the beginnings of the activities of the *nigama* which assumed considerable importance in Vaiśālī and other towns in the Gupta age.

The lowest territorial unit was undoubtedly the village, under the *grāmika*, who seems to have been a regular part of the Kusāṇa system of administration in the Mathurā region. A *grāmika* is expressly mentioned in a Mathurā Jain inscription of the time of Vāsudeva[1]; another Jain votive image epigraph from the same place, which mentions two generations of an apparently local *grāmika*[2], should also be ascribed to Kusāṇa times. This village institution was obviously taken over by the Kuṣāṇas from their predecessors and retained by them, for the office of *grāmika* was as old as the time of Bimbisāra, whose kingdom is credited with the existence of 80,000 *grāmikas*. The post continued in Maurya times, as is known from the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. But the continuity in name does not necessarily suggest continuity in status and functions. We do not know precisely how far the *grāmika* of post-Maurya times continued to perform the duties of the *gāmabhojaka* of pre-Maurya and *grāmika* of Maurya times. Some indication of the position and functions of the *gramika* can, however, be obtained from references to that officer in Manu. Maintenance of law and order, for purposes of which in cases of necessity he could approach the lord of ten villages, and collection of royal dues in the form of grain, drink, fuel, etc., were his chief duties,[3] and in these respects he does not seem to have been different from the earlier village headman. Nor does there seem to have taken place any change in his mode of appointment, since like the *gāmabhojaka* the *grāmika* was appointed by the king. But we notice two important changes in the office of the village headman in Manu. First, he was no longer trusted with the defence of the village, a function which seems to have been exercised by the *gāmabhojaka* in the pre-Maurya period and undertaken by the *grāmika* and the villagers in Maurya times.[4] This was now transferred to the *gulma* or military cantonments stationed

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1. *Lüders' List*, no. 69a.
2. Ibid., no. 48.
3. *Manu*, VII. 116-18.
4. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 226; *AŚ*,III. 10.

by the king in two, three or five villages in the countryside.[1] Apparently in post-Maurya times the foreign rulers did not consider it safe to leave the old village headmen in possession of arms. Secondly, the *grāmika* was paid not in the shape of fines gathered from the villagers as in pre-Maurya times, or in cash salary as the *grāmabhṛtaka* in Maurya times, but in grant of a piece of land.[2] Thus the first tended to decrease and the second to strengthen the power of the headman. But on the whole the hereditary character of the post coupled with the grant of land for the office tilted the balance in favour of the growing importance of the village headman, which development can be inferred from the use of the title *grāmasya adhipati* (lord of the village) for the *grāmika*.[3] We also hear of an officer called *padrapāla*,[4] who may have been the head of the common uncultivated land attached to the village.

On the basis of Manu it can be said that the *grāmika* of Kuṣāṇa times had something to do with revenue collection, but we have no information about the other revenue officers of this period. Nor have we any idea about the different kinds of tenure. We get, however, some indication of the revenue system of the Kuṣāṇas from the prevalence of the *akṣayanīvi* tenure during this period. The Mathurā Stone Inscription of Huviṣka (year 28—A. D. 106 ?) refers to two gifts, one of *puṇyaśālā*[5] and the other of 500 *purāṇas*,[6] according to the *akṣayanīvi* system, which means that these endowments were made on a permanent basis. During this period endowments of money were also made in Mahārāṣṭra according to the same system, as we learn from the Nāsik Cave Inscription of the time of Nahapāna[7], who was probably a kṣatrapa under Kaniṣka in the early part of his satrapal rule. Land grants according to this system, which meant numerous exemptions in revenue, became frequent in the Gupta period. From the first century B. C. onwards we have epigraphic evidence of land grants made by the Sātavāhana rulers, but we have no such epigraphic examples in the case of northern India. In all

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1. *Manu*, VII. 114.
2. Ibid., VII. 119.
3. Ibid., VII. 115-16.
4. B. N. Puri, *India under the Kuṣāṇas* p. 84.
5. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 49, ll. 1-3.
6. Ibid., ll. 11-12.
7. Ibid., II, no. 58, l. 1.

likelihood it was under the Kuṣāṇas that the practice of making grants according to the *akṣayanīvi* tenure was extended to land in northern India. It seems that because of foreign conquest and occupation land came to be treated more and more as private possession, and hence it came to be regarded more and more partable. But the prevalence of this practice meant great loss in revenue to the state. There is, however, another aspect of the *akṣayanīvi* gifts sanctioned by the Kuṣāṇa and Sātavāhana rulers. Money endowments, according to this system, in both the North and South, suggest that during the first two centuries of the Christian era the use of money was in a very flourishing state. Money-lending seems to have been sanctioned by religion, for religious needs were to be met out of interest on money endowments. This fact together with the large number of copper coins attributable to Kuṣāṇas may lead us to think that revenues were largely collected in cash. In spite of money economy, which could have enabled the Kuṣāṇas to maintain their authority over the lesser lords, the practice of permanent grants, and the feudatory organization, were bound to set in motion the tendencies towards decentralisation.

Perhaps the centrifugal forces were counterbalanced by the proclaimed association of divine elements with the ruler. Despite the fact that most Kuṣāṇa rulers were Buddhist, they tried to deify themselves by adopting the title of *devaputra* (son of God) and instituting the dead king's cult. The deification of the king was foreign to the Buddhist theories of the origin of kingship as enunciated in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and hardly in complete accord with the early brāhmaṇical theories. Although the coronation formulas of the later Vedic period refer to prayers to various gods for conferring their respective qualities on the king, they nowhere describe him as the son of God. On the contrary the Vedic coronation formulas clearly mention the human parents of the king. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, however, represents the king as the manifestation of Prajāpati.[1] A similar idea is found in the *Atharva Veda*, which describes Vaiśvānara Parīkṣit as the king who rules over all peoples, the god who is above mortals.[2]

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1. V. 1. 5. 14.
2. XX. 127. 7-10.

but this portion of the collection is a later addition. At any rate it is clear that such a view of the divinity of the king did not prevail on any considerable scale during the Vedic period. In subsequent times the *Arthaśāstra* makes skilful use of religion for strengthening royal authority[1], but it does not lend divinity to the office of the king. The Buddhist ruler Aśoka prided himself on being called *devānāmpriya*, dear to gods, a title which was continued by Daśaratha, the grandson of Aśoka[2], but it was abandoned in post-Maurya times when the title *devaputra*, mentioned in 21 Brāhmī (according to *Lüders' List*) and 3 Kharoṣṭhī (according to Konow's List) inscriptions, seems to have been as popular with the Kuṣāṇa rulers as *devānāmpriya* with Aśoka ; the title *devavrata*, devoted to God, was confined to the Parthian king Gondopharnes.[3]

Once the title *devaputra* had been adopted by the Kuṣāṇa rulers, theoretical justification came to be provided in a near contemporary Mahāyānist Buddhist text, *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, to which attention was first drawn by Sylvain Lévi.[4] Here the question is asked why a king born as a man is called God (*deva*) and why he is styled the son of God (*devaputra*).[5] The answer is that before being born as a man he was living among the gods, and that, because the thirty-three gods (each) contributed to his substance, therefore he is called "God-son".[6] A similar explanation of the divine origin of the king in the *Manu Śmṛti*[7] and the *Śānti Parva* was probably inspired by Kuṣāṇa associations. Unlike the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, Manu does not use the term *devaputra* for a king but states that the king is vested with the respective attributes of eight gods[8],

1. Supra, pp. 192-98.
2. *Lüders' List*, nos. 954-56
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 29, l. 1.
4. *JA*, 1934, p. 1 ff.
5. *kathaṃ manuṣyasaṃbhūto rājā devas tu procyate, kena ca hetunā rājā devaputras tu procyate.* Quoted by F. W. Thomas in *B. C. Law Volume*, ii, 313.
6. *devendrāṇām adhiṣṭhāne mātuḥ kukṣau pravekṣyati. purvam adhiṣṭhite devaiḥ paścād garbhe prapadyate. Kiṃ cāpi mānuṣe loke jāyate śrīyate nṛpaḥ; api vai devasambhūto devaputraḥ sa ucyate. trayastriṃśair devarājendrair bhāgodatto nṛpasya hi; putrāstvaṃ sahadevānāṃ nirmito manujeśvaraḥ. JA*, 1934, pp. 3-4.
7. The law-book of Manu is generally assigned to the period 200 B.C.—A.D. 200; probably the extracts dealing with *rājadharma* were compiled in the first two centuries of the Christian era.
8. VII. 7.

and asserts that even if a child the king should not be disregarded, for he functions as a great divinity in the form of a human being.[1] The *Śānti Parva*, which has many verses in common with Manu and which poses the question regarding the origin of kingship practically in the same manner as the above-mentioned Buddhist source, represents the original king to be the descendant of God.[2] Thus these three texts, one Buddhist and the other two brāhmaṇical, impart such a divine character to the king as he never enjoyed before, and in all these the inspiration seems to have come from the Kuṣāṇa side. But the Kuṣāṇa royal title *devaputra* was not in accord with Indian tradition, and hence it did not find favour with other Indian rulers, subsequent or contemporary.

It has been contended by F. W. Thomas that *devaputra* was not an official title of the Kuṣāṇa rulers but a complimentary epithet given to them by their subjects, a view accepted by U.N. Ghoshal.[3] Taking the hint from Lévi Thomas establishes that *devaputras* are mentioned in earlier Indian literature and that they form a class of divinities.[4] But the use of the term in earlier literature as "god-son" or as "a class of divinity" does not preclude it from being used in a special sense by the Kuṣāṇa rulers. That the title *devaputra* was used to underline the divinity of the Kuṣāṇa rulers can be inferred from its justification given in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* and the explanation of the divine origin in near contemporary texts on polity. Thomas argues that this title cannot be regarded as official, for it does not occur in Kuṣāṇa coins which contain the official titles such as *mahārāja* and *rājātirāja*. On the basis of his consultation with Allan he holds that Cunningham's reading of *devaputra* on a coin of Kuyala Kara Kaphsa (Kadphises II) is an error.[5] Even if this is conceded we may note that all the titles cannot be accommodated in the coins due to lack of space. Perhaps *devaputra* was not considered so important a title as to find place in the coins to the exclusion of such other official titles as *mahārāja* and *rājātirāja*. Thomas' contention that in India the term *devaputra* was never used as an appellation of royalty except in reference to

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1. VII. 8.
2. Ch. 59.
3. *The Mauryas and Sātavāhanas*, p. 345.
4. *B. C. Law Volume*, ii, 306-10.
5. Ibid., 307.

the Yueh-chih[1] does not lend support to his theory. Several other Kuṣāṇa titles such as *rājātirāja*, *ṣāhi*, *ṣāhānuṣāhi* were also not used by Indian rulers, but for that reason they cannot be dismissed as unofficial epithets of the Kuṣāṇas. Thomas points out that direct communications in Kharoṣṭhī from Chinese Turkestan mention *mahanuava* and *maharaya* as the titles of the king but omit *devaputra*.[2] But this line of argument does not sustain his thesis since the other Kuṣāṇa official titles *rājātirāja* and *ṣāhānuṣāhi* are also not mentioned in the preliminary to these communications. In face of Thomas' negative arguments, which only refer to the omission of *devaputra* in some sources, we have positive evidence to show that the title was used not only in India, but also in Central Asia, where it occurs in the Khotanese documents in the Kharoṣṭhī, especially in datings.[3] In the Kuṣāṇa inscriptions *devaputra* is mentioned along with other official titles, and hence it cannot be treated on a separate footing from them. Besides, it is applied to Huviṣka by a state official, who held the title or designation of *bakanapati* and who was the son of a *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*.[4] It is but natural that the officers would prefer to use only official titles. Further, the title *daivaputra* appears along with other official titles in the famous Allahabad Inscription, which was drafted by Hariṣeṇa, the official scribe of Samudra Gupta. He could not have probably adopted an appellation which was invented by and confined to the subjects and not officially favoured by the Kuṣāṇa rulers. Finally, the evidence of a Buddhist text of the third century A. D., translated into Chinese in A. D. 392, in which the king of India and the king of the Yueh-chih each is described as "Son of Heaven",[5] and the testimony of a Chinese source of the third century A. D., in which the king of the Yueh-chih is described as the Son of Heaven[6], are decisive; and Thomas himself finds it difficult to refute their testimony.[7] Thus it is pretty clear that the title

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1. Ibid., 319.
2. Ibid., 308.
3. *CII*, ii, pt. I, p. lxxiv. Unfortunately I have no information about the contents of the coins of Kaniṣka and Vāsudeva, which have been discovered in Russian Central Asia.
4. *JRAS*, 1924, pp. 402-3.
5. *B. C. Law Volume*, ii, 314-15.
6. Ibid., 318.
7. Ibid., 319.

devaputra was officially adopted by the Kuṣāṇas. But perhaps Thomas is right in suggesting that this title was not of Chinese origin. If with Allan and Thomas we reject the reading *devaputra* on a coin of Wima Kadphises, it would appear that this title was peculiar only to the Kaniṣka group of Kuṣāṇa rulers, who completely supplanted the Parthian rule in North-Western India in the second half of the first century A. D. Whatever might have been the source, Semitic or Hellenistic, it is undoubted that the two Parthian rulers Pharates II and III, who flourished in the first half of the first century A. D. and were the immediate predecessors of the Kuṣāṇas, had adopted the title of "god-fathered."[1] Apparently when Parthia had been conquered by the early Kuṣāṇas the Parthian titles and dominions alike were appropriated by Kaniṣka and his successors. As the explanations given in contemporary texts show, in course of time the title came to be used as an important political weapon.

The Kuṣāṇas followed the practice of erecting *devakulas*, in which the statues of the dead rulers were housed. The term *devakula* is recorded in the inscription on the colossal image of Wima[2], and we have further reference to the repair of the *devakula* of the grandfather of Huviṣka during the reign of the latter.[3] On the basis of the *Pratimānāṭaka* of Bhāsa the term *devakula* has rightly been interpreted to mean the place where statues were erected in honour of dead potentates.[4] Further on the strength of the same source it is argued that this structure was a temporal temple and not a place of worship.[5] But the fact that the temple in the drama bore no flag, had no divine weapons and other signs of an ordinary temple,[6] merely suggests that it was not as important as regular temples. Much should not be made of the fact that in the drama the brāhmaṇa keeper prevents Bharata from bowing before the images of his ancestors. Here we have to bear in mind the argument of the keeper that a brāhmaṇa

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1. Ibid., 305.
2. D. R. Sahni, *JRAS*, 1924, p. 402.
3. Ibid., pp. 402-3.
4. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, 1923, pp. 98-99; H. P. Sāstrī, ibid., pp. 558-61.
5. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, 1919, pp. 98-99.
6. Ibid.

should not bow before kṣatriya sovereigns taking them to be gods.[1] This plea is obviously inspired by his class prejudices and is irrelevant to the kṣatriya Bharata. The term *devakula* clearly means "deity-house", and, what is more important, the Mathurā Inscription of Huviṣka shows that the repair of the dilapidated *devakula* of his grandfather by a state official was an act of religious merit intended for the increase of the life and strength of the *mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra* Huviṣka.[2] The prevalent method of seeking the physical and spiritual well-being of the king was to erect some *stūpa* over the relics of the Buddha or to perform similar other acts of piety. Obviously in this case also the physical welfare of the king was to be achieved by performing the religious act of the repair of the *devakula* of his ancestor. Moreover, from the last line of this inscription[3] it appears that something was done for the daily guests, and brāhmaṇas[4] who were evidently attached to the *devakula* as priests. Cases of such priests are to be found in the *devagaḍhas* of Rajputana.[5]

From where did the Kuṣāṇas derive the practice of setting up *devakulas*? It is suggested that this system was taken over from the Romans on the bank of the Tibet.[6] But the cult of the dead king was in vogue not only in ancient Mesopotamia, but also in Egypt where mortuary temples were built to enshrine the statues of the Pharaohs. Probably the Romans imbibed this idea from these predecessors and passed it on to the Kuṣāṇas either through direct commercial contacts or through some intermediaries. On the basis of the pre-Kauṭilyan date of Bhāsa it would be wrong to suppose that the practice prevailed in India from pre-Maurya times,[7] and therefore was adopted by the Kuṣāṇa rulers. The correct position seems to be different. Reference has been made to *devapitṛpūjā* (worship of gods and ancestors) in Kauṭilya,[8] but this does not imply that the statues of the fore-

1. Ibid., p. 960.
2. *JRAS*, 1924, p. 402, ll. 2-5 of the inscription.
3. Ibid., l. 6.
4. Ibid., p. 403.
5. *JBORS*, 1919, p. 559.
6. *PHAI*, 5th edn., p. 5.
7. *JBORS*, 1919, p. 560.
8. II. 6; *PHAI*, 5th edn., p. 517, fn. 3.

fathers were worshipped. Besides, Kauṭilya does not specifically refer to the worship of the dead kings. Obviously this practice was introduced by the Kuṣāṇa rulers who have left several royal statues. The writings of Bhāsa, who seems to have flourished during the period, merely reflect the existing practice. Clearly the practice of erecting *devakulas* was in keeping with the official title of *devaputra*, and both contributed to the apotheosis of the Kuṣāṇa kings. That the adoption of the title *devaputra* and establishment of *devakulas* by the Kuṣāṇas were deliberate devices to deify the kings can be deduced from the representation of divine aura round the busts of the kings on their coins. On the gold pieces of Kadphises II the shoulders of the king are surrounded by luminous rays of flames, and his bust appears to issue from the clouds like the gods of Greece. The nimbus appears on some pieces of Kaniṣka, but is much more frequent on certain gold pieces of Huviṣka, who is at once ornamented with nimbus, flames and clouds. Vāsudeva has simply the nimbus round his head.[1] We know that the nimbus or *prabhā-maṇḍala* was especially associated with the divinities represented on the coins of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka.[2] Therefore it was in order to indicate their celestial origin that the Kuṣāṇa kings got themselves represented on their coins with the nimbus, aureole, clouds or flames.[3]

In contradistinction to the theory of Divine Right in England, where it developed as a logical sequel to the ideas of absolutism and centralisation prevalent in the Tudor period, the all-pervading activities of the state of Maurya India did not emphasise the divinity of royal power. On the contrary the divine theory was sharply enunciated in post-Maurya times, when forces of disintegration had come to the foreground. Just as the high-sounding titles of the Kuṣāṇa rulers indicated nothing more than the reality of decentralisation so also the device of deification was nothing more than an attempt to conceal and remove their political weakness. Although the potentiality of the idea of the divinity of the king in strengthening royal absolutism could

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1. M. E. Drouin, "The Nimbus and Signs of Deification on the Coins of the Indo-Skythian Kings", *Revue Numismatiqe*, 1901, pp. 154-66, tr. *IA*, 1903, p. 427.
2. *IA*, 1903, p. 428.
3. Ibid., p. 432.

not be denied, it was eagerly seized and sharpened as a weapon of the ideological defence of the brāhmaṇical social order.[1]

The deification of the Kuṣāṇa king served to secure him the allegiance of the subjects, of which we have enough evidence in the religious gifts made by officers and individuals. Thus a Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Taxila refers to the establishment of the relics of the Buddha in the Dharma-rājikā *stūpa* of Taxila by a Bactrian for the bestowal of health on an unnamed Kuṣāṇa emperor, who is described as *mahārāja*, *rājātirāja* and *devaputra*.[2] Similarly another Kharoṣṭhi inscription from Afghanistan speaks of the institution of the relics of Śākya Muni for the spiritual merit of *mahārāja rājātirāja* Huviṣka.[3] The practice of making gifts by individuals and state officers for the spiritual and physical benefit of the rulers never took root in northern India, but it continued among the later Kuṣāṇas of the north-west frontier. Thus a monastery (*vihāra*) was erected by a *vihārasvāmī* named Roṭa-Siddha-Vṛddhi not only for the benefit of his relatives but also for that of the queen, princes and princesses of Mahārāja Toramāṇa Shāh Jaūvla.[4]

The Kuṣāṇa claim to divine power was accompanied by the unambiguous declaration of the religion they professed. The coins, which are always considered an important insignia of sovereignty, clearly indicate the faith to which they belonged. Thus the Kuṣāṇa *yavuga* Kujala Kasa, identified with Kadphises I, calls himself *dhramathidasa*,[5] a title which also occurs as *saca-dhrama-ṭhitasa* on the other coins of the Kuṣāṇas. This apparently refers to their devotion to the *dharma* of the Buddha. Besides, we have representations of Śiva on their coins.[6] But in spite of their proclaimed devotion to Buddhism or Śaivism the Kuṣāṇas never adopted a policy of religious persecution. On the other hand they seem to have worshipped numerous gods, Greek, Iranian and Indian, who are represented on the coins of Huviṣka.[7] Under their rule Mathurā was a noted centre of

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1. The current interpretations of the Dharmaśāstra ideas on the king's divinity have been summarised and examined in Ghoshal, *A History of India Political Ideas*, pp. 566-67, fn. 20.
2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 34, l. 3.
3. Ibid., II, no. 55, l. 2.
4. *Lüders' List*, no. 5.
5. *Sel. Inscrr.*, II, no. 19, l. 1.
6. Ibid., p. 125, fn. 3; p. 155.
7. Ibid., p. 155, fn. 5.

Jainism, as would appear from the large number of the gifts of Jain images made there by lay and clerical votaries in the reigns of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka. Similarly the brāhmaṇical sacrificial religion was also tolerated. An inscription mentions the setting of the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) by a brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja gotra after having performed a *sattra* of twelve nights.[1] Apparently it was a policy of live and let live. But since the Kuṣāṇas showed preference for Buddhism possibly this contributed to brāhmaṇical resurgence under the Guptas, who took the place of the Kuṣāṇa power in northern India within half a century of the end of their rule.

The sketch of the Kuṣāṇa polity, though inadequate on account of lack of material, would show that the Kuṣāṇas introduced certain new elements in Indian polity. Some of them such as the practice of making gifts for the spiritual or physical well-being of the king, and the dual governorship in the provinces, did not find suitable soil in India. But the idea of the divinity of the king made some impression on later rulers, for Samudra Gupta is compared to four different gods. Again, the office of the *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, which came to function in the eastern, southern and northern provinces of the Gupta empire,[2] and the practice of making land grants according to the *akṣaya-nīvi* tenure became regular features of the Gupta polity. Above all, the main characteristic of the Kuṣāṇa political structure, namely the organization of the hierarchical feudatory system, seems to have been adopted by Samudra Gupta in his imperial system. For the rest, the Kuṣāṇas continued the old pattern of village administration by the *grāmika*, with the probable change that this officer was paid for his services by assignment of some land but relieved of his responsibility for the defence of his village. Possibly they encouraged the guilds of artisans and merchants which assumed more powers in later times.

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1. *Lüders' List*, no. 149a.
2. Ghoshal, *Indian Historiography and other Essays*, p. 178.

Chapter XVI

THE GUPTA POLITY

I

The chief element in the economic background of the Gupta polity was the excessive preoccupation of the people with land. It was an age of agricultural expansion, evidenced by land grants to brāhmaṇas in backward areas. The period saw the pronounced beginnings of the growth of private rights in land, of the sale and purchase of which for religious purposes we have the first epigraphic instances in north Bengal. The law-books had to take notice of this important phenomenon, and both in law and fact we hear of many devices for resolving land disputes. Land grants affected the administrative structure in a way they had never done before. Grants of villages to religious beneficiaries led to new fiscal and administrative arrangements.

Although the volume of foreign trade decreased in the Gupta period, arts and crafts prospered in northern India. Individual artisans, merchants and traders and their guilds are frequently mentioned in seals and inscriptions, and emerge as a leading factor at the local levels of Gupta government. The fact that the Guptas seem to have been vaiśyas might explain this development as well as the appointment of non-brāhmaṇa and non-kṣatriya governors and officials in different parts of the empire.

What makes the Gupta period spectacular from the economic point of view is the abundance of gold coins issued by its rulers. It is in this sense that this period should be regarded as a golden age. Gold coins were exchanged in land transactions, and may have been collected as revenue and disbursed in payment to high officers. But the paucity of copper coins would suggest that minor officers were not maintained in large numbers.

The capital fact in the political situation of Gupta times was the victorious march of Samudra Gupta followed later by the campaigns of Candra Gupta II in western India. This made it necessary to evolve some kind of relation with the subjugated princes.

Finally we may take note of the dominance of the brāhmaṇical ideas. The privileges of the priestly caste enunciated in the law-book of Manu are expounded with force by Nārada in this period. The didactic texts of the period preach the merits accruing out of land grants, and the idea of securing spiritual merit for the ancestors works as a great lever leading to large-scale land gifts and consequent administrative problems.

Changes in the nature of kingship in the Gupta period are difficult to detect. In contrast to the Sātavāhana practice under the Guptas royal succession was purely patriarchal. Although the Gupta emperors mention the names of their mothers, women did not play any effective part in administration. Prabhāvatī Guptā, daughter of Candra Gupta II, acted as regent in the Vākāṭaka kingdom, but we have no such instances in the Gupta kingdom. However, the law of primogeniture was not firmly established, and sometimes elder sons were passed over in favour of younger sons, and according to one theory after the death of Skanda Gupta in A.D. 467 the empire had to be partitioned between two contending princes. The curious practice of younger brother succeeding the elder, which prevailed among the Maitrakas of Valabhī, the feudatories of the Guptas, did not obtain in the Gupta dynasty.

Coins and inscriptions represent the Gupta king primarily as a fighter and general who took delight in hunting and fighting. The king appointed ministers, commanders, governors, etc. He received the obeisance of his vassals and princes, and his pompous titles *parameśvara*, *mahārājādhirāja*, *paramabhaṭṭāraka* indicate the existence of lesser princes and chiefs with whom he had to come to terms in his empire.

As in the case of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi, the maintenance of the *varṇāśrama dharma* appears as an important royal duty in Gupta inscriptions. Protection of the subjects is another major obligation imposed upon the king, who is described as the giver of thousands of gold coins. The old theory that the king was entitled to taxes in lieu of protection is repeated in some Gupta legal texts. But it is no longer emphasised; on the other hand we notice a significant new trend. Kātyāyana states that the king is entitled to taxes because he is the owner of the land.[1]

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1. Verse. 16.

This theory lends feudal character to kingship and enables it to make land grants, although in actual transactions parties having interests in the land have to be consulted and informed.

The second change noticeable in the Gupta kingship is not qualitative but quantitative and relates to its divine associations. Like the Sātavāhana Gautmīputra Sātakarṇi, the Gupta kings are repeatedly compared to different gods such as Yama, Varuṇa, Indra, Kubera, etc. They are compared to Viṣṇu as regards their function of preserving and protecting the people, and Lakṣmī, wife of Viṣṇu and goddess of prosperity, is represented on many Gupta coins. The Vaiṣṇavite affiliations of the Gupta kings therefore may have served some political purpose. But the striking thing is that they are called *deva*[1] which clearly represents them as god, although not the son of the god as in the case of the Kuṣāṇa kings.

In spite of the divine elements attributed to the Gupta king it would be wrong to envison him as a despot in law. Theoretically he laboured under the obligations of observing the rules laid down by the Dharmaśāstras. In practice the brāhmaṇas, who acted as the chief custodians and interpreters of these laws, exercised a great check on royal power. The king had to further share power with the guilds and corporate bodies, whose decisions he had to ditto and whose usages he had to enforce. Above all, the king had to reckon with the beneficiaries and feudatories who enjoyed enormous powers. In fact royal power was more circumscribed in Gupta times than in Maurya or pre-Gupta days.

Ministers called by different names such *mantrin*, *amātya* or *saciva* may have restrained the despotic activities of the king, although inscriptions give very little idea of their functions and no idea of their corporate existence. The term *mantrimaṇḍala* is used in the *Kāmandaka Nitisāra*, a text of about the 8th century A.D., but not in inscriptions. Undoubtedly some individual ministers such as Hariṣeṇa were rendered powerful because of having combined the offices of the *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, *kumārāmātya*, *sāndhivigrahika* in the same person. And then the post was hereditary in the same family for several generations. Such families must have played an important part in politics.

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 2, l.28. The term *paramadaivata* (ibid., no 16, l.2) probably means the great devotee of the god.

Ministers formed part of the higher bureaucracy of the Guptas. Among the other high officers we may take special notice of the *kumārāmatya* and the *sāndhivigrahika*, who are not known to earlier inscriptions. Just as the *mahāmātras* formed an important cadre of officers under Aśoka, the *amātyas* under the Sātavāhanas, so also the *kumārāmātyas*[1] formed the chief cadre for recruiting high functionaries under the Guptas. The office of the *kumārāmātya* is repeatedly mentioned as existing in the headquarters of the *bhuktis* of Magadha or Nagara and Tīra.[2] We also hear of *kumārāmātyas* attached to the emperor[3] or to the heir-apparent.[4] The district of Pañcanagarī *viṣaya* in Bengal was presided over by a *kumārāmātya*. Although the holders of this title appear as district governors, they are also known as *mantrins*, *senāpatis*, *mahādaṇḍanāyakas*,[5] *sāndhivigrahikas*,[6] and even *mahārājas*.[7] Some of the *kumārāmātyas* functioned in their own rights and maintained their regular office called *kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*. The literal meaning minor *amātya* or the *amātya* attached to the prince does not indicate the functions of the officer which differed according to the additional office he held. Towards the end of the Gupta empire some *kumārāmātyas* such as the *mahārāja* Nandana[8] asserted independence and issued land charters.

Literally translated as the minister of peace and war, the office of the *sāndhivigrahika* first appears under Samudra Gupta, whose *amātya* Hariṣeṇa holds this title. But in the lesser feudatory state of Śarvanātha such an officer is known as the *mahā-sāndhivigrahika*, and hence it would be wrong to think in terms of any hierarchy of these officers. While the need for such an office can be well understood in the context of the relations subsisting between the many warring principalities from Gupta times onwards his function of issuing land charters to brāhmaṇas cannot be easily explained. The practice began from

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1. Curiously the literary texts of Gupta times do not throw any light on the office of the *kumārāmātya*.
2. The term is *tīra-kumārāmāty ādhikaraṇakasya*; the word *bhukti* is not mentioned. *ASIR*, 1903-4, p. 109.
3. Ibid., p. 108.
4. Ibid., pp. 107-8.
5. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no.2, l.32.
6. Ibid.
7. *JASB, NS,v* (1909), 164.
8. *EI*, X, p. 49.

the Gupta period and gained currency in early mediaeval times. Altekar thinks that because the foreign office possessed detailed knowledge of the family tree of the grantors the *sāndhivigrahika* was entrusted with the task of drafting land charters. But perhaps the main duty of this officer was to deal with the feudatories who may have been granted charters. And hence he may have been given the task of issuing charters to religious parties also.

Considerations of caste[1] and family certainly played an important part in the recruitment of officers. We have some examples of higher governors belonging to the royal family, and certain families contributed a good number of *amātyas* and provincial governors known as *uparikas*. The growing hereditary character of the ministers, divisional and district officers is very evident. Although Kauṭilya lays down that officials (*amātyas*) and soldiers should be hereditary, we are unable to cite actual cases from the Maurya period. But the inscriptions of the Gupta period show that the posts of the *mantrin* and the *saciva*, who served with the Gupta emperor, were hereditary,[2] so was the post of the *amātya* in central India[3] and Vaiśālī.[4] In one case in central India we find five generations of office-holders in one family, of whom the first was *amātya*, the second *amātya* and *bhogika*, the third *bhogika*, and the fourth and the fifth *mahāsāndhivigrahika*.[5] The same region also furnishes other instances of two[6] and sometimes three[7] generations of *bhogikas*. These officers however served the feudatories of the Guptas and not the Gupta kings directly. But the surname *datta* of the *uparikas* in charge of the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana[8] suggests that they probably belonged to the same family. The officials owed their of tenure to the discretion of the emperor, but in practice they and their descendants continued to be in office because of their local strength. They further gained in power and influence by combining several offices in the same person. We have the famous example of Hariṣeṇa, who held several

1. Infra, Ch. XII.
2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 17, ll. 6-7; CII, iii, no.6, ll. 3-4.
3. *CII*, iii, no 22, ll. 28-30.
4. *ASR*, 1913-14, p. 134.
5. *CII*, iii no. 22, ll. 28-30; no. 23, ll. 18-20.
6. Ibid., no, 27, ll. 21-22.
7. Ibid., no. 26, ll. 22-23.
8. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 18, l. 3; no. 34, l. 2; no. 36, l. 2.

important portfolios. We hear of a *kumārāmātya* who held the offices of the *mahāśvapati* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*.[1]

We have no precise idea of the mode of payment to the officers under the Gupta empire. The discovery of numerous Gupta gold coins and their use in land transactions in Bengal coupled with the prevalence of the tax known as *hiraṇya* would suggest that at least higher officers were paid in cash. The Chinese evidence on this point is not quite clear. Legge's translation of a passage from Fa-hsien informs us that "the king's body-guards and attendants, all have regular salaries."[2] But Beal translates the passage differently : "The chief officers of the king have all allotted revenues"[3]; and recently a Chinese scholar has translated the crucial passage thus : "The king's attendants, guards, and retainers all receive emoluments and pensions."[4] If we accept the last rendering, it would appear that the term emoluments, having a wider context, might include grants of revenues. Thus it would appear that members of bureaucracy were paid in both cash and by grants of revenues.

In addition to the high echelons inscriptions reveal about more than a dozen other officers of high and low grades, who will come in for notice when we discuss the military, fiscal and rural aspects of the Gupta system of government. Although the Gupta establishment was not as large as the one provided in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, it was certainly neither negligible nor powerless. Records of land transactions make it clear that no land could be sold unless the recordkeepers or the *pustapālas* certified that it was available for sale and unless the district governor or the *viṣayapati* endorsed it. The hereditary character of the officers and decreasing payment in cash would suggest that the Gupta bureaucrats were placed in a stronger position to develop vested interests than the Maurya bureaucracy.

II

In spite of the whirlwind conquests of Samudra Gupta and the campaigns of Candra Gupta II and Skanda Gupta the

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1, *ASR*, 1911-12, p. 52,
2. *A Record of Buddhistic kingdom*, Tr., p. 45.
3. *Travels of Fah-hien etc.*, p. 55.
4. Ho Chang-chun, "Fa-hsien's Pilgrimage to Buddhist Countries", *Chinese Literature*, 1956, no. 3, 154.

information about the military system of the Guptas is meagre. Only about the composition of the army we can draw a few inferences from Gupta coins and inscriptions. Although some Gupta kings are described as excellent, unrivalled chariot warriors, horsemen are usually represented on their coins. Archers are also depicted in coins which testify to the importance of horse archery and cavalry. The growing importance of cavalry is supported by seals and inscriptions which speak of *aśvapati*[1], *mahāśvapati*[2] and *bhaṭāśvapati*[3], evidently the commander of horsemen. The early Gupta records do not mention any officer connected with the management of elephants. The term *pilupati* occurs in a sixth century inscription from Bengal, and we are not quite sure whether the office was important under early Gupta Kings. Designations for the commanders of the other wings of the army are so far not known from inscriptions. The other military officers are *mahābalādhikṛta*, *mahāpratīhāra* and *gaulmika*. The last two are known to pre-Gupta inscriptions, but the first appears as a new military functionary in this period.

Civil officials such as *amātyās*, *kumārāmātyas*, etc., performed military functions or were promoted to the rank of high military officers. A minister hailing from Pāṭaliputra accompanied Candra Gupta II on his campaign to western India. Similarly military officers may have performed civil functions.

We have some idea about the stationing of troops in important cities such as Vaiśālī. The discovery of a seal bearing the legend *śrīraṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*[4] from there attests the existence of some military store which may have been needed for the army stationed there. We also hear of the war office attached to the royal heir-apparant[5] and of the head of the infantry and cavalry.[6] The head of the palace guard was also stationed at Vaiśālī.[7]

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1. *ASR*, 1911-12, pp. 52-53.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 1903-04, p. 109. The *mahāpilupati* mentioned in the spurious Nālandā plate of Samudra Gupta does not appear in earlier records.
4. Ibid., p. 108.
5. *yuvarāja-bhaṭṭārakapādīya-balādhikaraṇasya*. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 109.
7. Ibid., p. 108.

III

The taxation system of the Guptas was not so elaborate and organised as that of the Mauryas. The villagers paid in kind certain customary miscellaneous dues, which could be measured, but these are not specified.[1] They also paid *hiraṇya*[2] or gold, but what it actually meant cannot be said. The artisans also had to pay some imposts,[3] and traders were subjected to customs on commodities of trade, which were levied and collected by the customs officer.[4] Probably he had to deal with the corporation of bankers, merchants and artisans which was active in Vaiśālī, Bhīṭā, Indor (Bulandshahr), Mandasor, etc.

We have some idea of the officials working in the district or *viṣaya* in connection with land transactions. The officer known as *pustapāla*[5] maintained records of land sale, and the village accountant (*grāmākṣapaṭalādhikṛta*[6]) preserved records of land in the village. It is difficult to make out the meaning of *pāditarika*, who is addressed in the Bihar grant of Skanda Gupta,[7] but the *gaulmika*[8] mentioned therein was a minor military officer in charge of a small detachment of soldiers. Probably he stood by the civil authorities in times of disturbances caused by peasants or unsocial elements.

The list of taxes enumerated in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya is much longer than that found in Gupta inscriptions, which would suggest that the burden of taxation decreased in Gupta times. The Greek accounts suggest that peasants had to pay one-fourth their produce as tax, but if we rely on the legal texts of the Gupta period and land sale transactions in Bengal the royal share did not exceed one-sixth of the produce. Of emergency taxes recommended in the *Arthaśāstra* there is no trace in Gupta times. In fact the principles of taxation which enjoin the king to leave enough subsistence to the producer were the products of the early centuries of the Christian era and may have influenced the fiscal policy of the rulers of this period. Since the Guptas

1. *CII*, iii, no. 60, l. 12.
2. *EI*, xxiii, no. 8, l. 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., no. 12, l. 29.
5. *EI*, xxiii, no. 8, l. 8.
6. *CII*, iii, no. 60, l. 15.
7. Ibid., no. 12, l. 28.
8. Ibid., l. 29

did not maintain a large administrative establishment they did not require as many taxes as the Mauryas did. Curiously enough more taxes are mentioned in Vākāṭaka inscriptions than in their Gupta counterparts.

Most revenue officers mentioned in land grants seem to have been connected with the assessment and collection of land revenue. *Āyuktaka* and *viniyuktaka* from both Bengal and Gujarat were connected with land transactions. For transfer of land in Bengal the *āyuktaka* had to undertake suitable steps. Land records were maintained by the *gramākṣapaṭalādhikṛta* or the *deśākṣapaṭalādhikṛta*, who possibly acted as accountants and paṭwārīs. Scribes called *divira*, *karaṇika*, kāyastha, etc., were employed chiefly in the revenue office, and Yājñavalkya advises the king to protect the subjects against the oppression of the kāyasthas.

Revenues may have been collected mostly in kind; probably rich peasants paid in cash, for gold coins have been discovered in large quantities and were certainly used in purchasing land. The officer who collected dues in cash is called *hiraṇya-sāmudāyika* and is mentioned in a Bengal inscription of the first half of the sixth century.[1] Since this officer appears along with the *audraṅgika*, who collected the royal share in kind, it is apparent that he did the same thing in cash.

The only officer connected with the collection of tolls on commodities seems to have been the *śaulkika*, although we hear of an officer in Bengal connected with the department of trade. During the first half of the sixth century in the territories held by the feudatories of the Guptas we come across the *aurṇasthānika*,[2] who had something to do with the regulation of the wool-market in Bengal; in Gujarat during the same period we hear of *draṅgika* who collected customs in border towns.

IV

The Gupta kings evolved, as we learn from inscriptions, the first systematic provincial and local administration, which was primarily concerned with the collection of revenues and

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III. no. 46, l. 4.
2. Ibid.

maintenance of law and order. The empire directly controlled by the Guptas was divided into a number of provinces, smaller than the Maurya province but much larger than the modern division.

The *bhukti* seems to have been the largest administrative unit under the Guptas, and there were at least six such divisions spread over Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. It was placed in charge of an *uparika*.[1] The exact connotation of this high officer is obscure; probably in origin it had something to do with the collection of *uparikara*, an additional impost on the peasants in addition to the fixed annual share of the produce. The officer was undoubtedly a governor appointed by the Gupta king, but the literal meaning of the term *bhukti* suggests that the territory placed under his charge was intended to be enjoyed rather than governed by him in its own interest. It is a pity that we have no information regarding the functions of the head of the *bhukti*.

The *bhukti* was divided into *viṣayas* or districts, whose number is not known. The *viṣayas* of Rājagṛha, Pāṭaliputra and Gaya were included in Magadhabhukti which, if we believe the geographical details in the spurious Nālandā grant of Samudra Gupta, also included Krimilā viṣaya,[2] roughly corresponding to the modern Monghyr district and extending over both the north and south of the Gaṅgā. In Tīrabhukti Vaiśālī was important enough to be the headquarters of a *viṣaya*, although it is mentioned as such in only one seal,[3] and here too the reading is doubtful. In Puṇḍravardhanabhukti the *viṣaya* of Koṭivarṣa was a famous administrative unit. The *viṣaya* wasin charge of the *kumārāmātya* in early times, but later it came to be placed under the *viṣayapati* Ordinarily in Bengal and Bihar the *viṣayapati* was the head of the *viṣaya* where he carried on administration with the help of the local office or *adhikaraṇa*. But in one case in western U.P. he was placed in charge of a district called *bhoga*. We have some idea of the way the district governor maintained his power in the *viṣaya* of Koṭivarṣa. He based his authority on the force consisting of elephants, cavalry and infantry, whose cost was defrayed probably by the revenues

1. *ASIR*, 1903-4, p. 109.
2. *EI*, XXV, no. 9, l. 5.
3. *ASIR*, 1903-4, p. 110.

supplied by the district.[1] Perhaps every district had a strong military contingent to back civil authority in times of need.

The *viṣaya* was divided into *vīthīs*. In Bihar we know of Nandavīthi,[2] whose headquarters lay 2 miles to the north-west of Surajgarha in south Monghyr. But several *vīthīs* are known from Bengal, and in one case we have full information about the composition of the committee which took part in its government. According to the Mallasārul copper-plate inscription of the time of Gopacandra, ascribable to the first half of the sixth century A.D., altogether eleven rural settlements, mostly villages, are specifically represented on the *adhikaraṇa* of the *vīthī* Vakkattaka situated in Vardhamānabhukti, so that it is not an eight-member body or a decimal unit as recommended by the law-books. Some representatives owe their headship of the villages to their *agrahāra* grants, others to their important military position as swordsmen or perhaps transport organisers; the remaining are unspecified. Thus landed and military interests—all connected with the king—are well represented on the committee. Whether the *vīthī adhikaraṇa* was an *ad hoc* body constituted according to the nature of the business it transacted or a regular committee cannot be said. We may note that of the eleven villages mentioned in this list two form part of the boundaries which enclose the land to be transferred with the consent of the committee. In any case the functioning of the *vīthī* managing body with landed beneficiaries and military personnel as its members was a reality, and probably they had something to do with maintenance of law and order and settlement of local disputes.

The *vīthī* consisted of villages, which formed the lowest units of administration; several of these are mentioned in Gupta inscriptions and seals. The leading part in managing the affairs of the village was taken by its *grāmika* and elders known as the *mahattama*, *mahattaka* or *mahattara*. Inscriptions speak of *grāmika* in Bengal[3] and central India. In the latter region his post seems to have become hereditary, for in one case the name of his father and grandfather is mentioned[4] He may have assisted in the

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1. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, p. 18.
2. *EI*, xxiii, no. 8, l. 3.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III. no. 34, l. 3.
4. *CII*, iii, no. 24, ll. 4-6.

collection of taxes, but in this case he had set up a boundary pillar on the limits of the kingdom of his prince.[1]

In north Bihar the head of the village called *mahattara* was important enough to have his seal. From this designation has been derived the term *mahto* prevalent in many parts of this province and still understood in some areas as the head of the village.

Land grants from Bengal provide some welcome information on the position of the *mahattaras*. Generally they did not belong to the brāhmaṇa community, for in land grants brāhmaṇas and *mahattaras* are addressed separately. In the Baigrām copper-plate inscription of A.D. 448 these elders are addressed as *samvyavahāripramukhān*,[2] but *mahattara* is the usual term for them. In north Bengal no land, even for religious purpose, could be sold without the consent of the *mahattaras*, some of whom also sold their lands for the same reason. The Mallasārul copper-plate mentioned above specifically names some of these *mahattaras* and similar other important elements from several villages. Three *mahattara-āgrahārīṇas* are each attached to one village,[3] which would suggest that the *mahattara* was the head of the village granted to him as an *agrahāra*. But in two villages two such elders are named in every case,[4] which would imply that in each village these two functionaries shared the management between them. The names of these *āgrahārīṇas* ending in *datta* and *svāmin*[5] suggest that some were brāhmaṇas and others kāyasthas who had been granted revenue-free villages for some services rendered to their king. In addition to these, the inscription also mentions a *mahattara* head of a village who is not an *āgrahārīṇa*.[6]

The inscription also mentions three *khāḍgīs*, swordsmen, each from one village,[7] suggesting thereby that villages were held by them for some kind of military service, and finally we hear of

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1. Ibid.
2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 41, l. 2.
3. Ibid., no. 46, ll. 5-6.
4. Ibid., ll. 6-7.
5. Ibid., ll. 5-7.
6. Ibid., l. 5.
7. Ibid., l. 7.

the *vāhanāyaka* Hari, etc., who represent one village.[1] Perhaps Hari presided over a village which supplied porters and carriers to the king. In Bengal village elders called *mahattaras* seem to have been organised into corporate bodies at the district level as well as the village level. The body at both the stages was called *aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa*,[2] a corporate organisation comprising eight leading families. Eight may well be a conventional number, whose origin is not known to us. Whether the families belonged to the same caste or represented the eight leading castes and professions in the locality is not known. Most probably all the families represented the same caste, but they should not be taken in the sense of small units as they are today but as wider circles of agnates. The Bengal inscriptions make it clear that no land transactions could be effected without their consent, and we can well presume that they wielded an effective voice in the management of other local affairs.

In some areas in central India local affairs in the rural areas were managed by a committee of five known as the *pañca-maṇḍalī*, which is greeted by a donor while making a religious donation. In this case we have the forerunner of the later *pañca-kula* in Rajasthan and Gujarat and of the subsequent panchāyat throughout the country. How the *pañcamaṇḍalī* was constituted is not known, but there is no doubt about its corporate character.

Finally we have to take note of the various *janapadas*, who issued their seals and coins. It is evident that although many of them were affiliated to Nālandā for fiscal and administrative purposes, they were important and autonomous enough to have their seals which testify to their corporate existence. For larger *janapadas* committees of five are recommended, and the practice seems to have started long before the Gupta period.

Some kind of *pariṣads* functioned in the neighbouring towns or villages of Vaiśālī. We hear of a *pariṣad* flourishing in *Udānakūpa*.[4] But it cannot be said whether it was a panchāyat managing the affairs of that village or a council of learned brāhmaṇas concerned with the interpretation of the laws laid down

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1. Ibid., ll. 7-8
2. Ibid., no. 34, ll. 2-3; *EI*, xvii, no. 23, ll. 5-6.
3. *Sabhā P.*, 5. 70. Edgerton places this *parvan* in the 2nd-Ist centuries. B.C.
4. *ASIR*, 1903-4, p. 109.

by the Dharmaśāstra. Yājñavalkya enjoins the king to make the people obey the laws of their families, castes, guilds, associations, or villages (*jānapadān*),[1] and Manu takes into account such laws.[2] All this indicates that the *jānapadas* in the Nālandā region had their own laws which were respected by the king.

The existence of these bodies should not be confused with the democratic participation of the rural people in administration. At best these indicate diffusion of authority in a limited circle whose support to the administration could not be easily dispensed with. The term *grāmādhipati* and *grāmasyādhipati* used in contemporary texts[3] would suggest that the village headman was treated as the lord of the village. If we rely on a passage from the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātasyāyana, perhaps in western India, where this text was composed, the village headman called *grāmādhipati āyuktaka* tended to become all-powerful. He compelled peasant women to fill up his granary, to carry various articles into or out of his office, to clean and decorate his residence, to work in his fields and to spin yarn of cotton, wool, flax or hemp for his clothes.[4]

The expanding scope of the village administration is a significant aspect of the Gupta polity. This came to happen because the state neither raised too many taxes to maintain a large official apparatus nor had too many copper coins to pay minor employees. Naturally many of the functions once performed by the central government devolved on the village administration, which was not a homogenous, egalitarian community but one dominated by landed and influential elements.

V

Towns in the Gupta empire were placed under an officer called *purapāla* at least in Bengal, but leading local elements were associated with the work of administration. In regard to north India seals and inscriptions would suggest that the Gupta period was the most flourishing age for the guilds of artisans

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1. I. 361.
2. VIII. 41; cf. SBE, xxv, 260, fn. 41
3. *ŚP*, 88. 3. For heads of multi-village units the terms *pati*, *adhipati* and *adhyakṣa* are used in *Manu*, VII. 115-19 and *SP*, 88. 3-9.
4. V. 5. 5; cf. *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 51, 52.

and traders functioning in such towns as Vaiśālī, Bhīṭā near Allahabad, Indor in Bulandshahr and Mandasor in Malwa. They evidently bore a good bit of responsibility for urban administration.

Vaiśālī in Bihar is an important town about whose administration we get some idea in Gupta times. We hear of the separate guilds of artisans (*kulika*) and of merchants (*śreṣṭhi*) in that town. But the most numerous seals, as many as 274, found there belong to the *nigama* guild of the *śreṣṭhis*, (merchants) *sārthavāhas* (itinerant traders) and *kulikas* (artisans).[1] The *nigama* has been compared to the modern Chamber of Commerce,[2] but the inclusion of artisans shows that it was a somewhat different and wider body which carried on not only economic activities but also the administration of the town. We do not possess any precise information about the constitution of the *nigama*, whose members seem to have been the leading persons from every profession either elected or hereditary. The titles *dāsa*, *datta*, *nandin*, *pāla*, *sena*, *siṁha*, etc., show that members of different castes were admitted in to the guild. The *nigama* probably performed municipal functions in regard to bankers, traders and artisans whom it represented, and also in relation to the employees of various civil and military offices whose headquarters were situated in Vaiśālī. We learn from a contemporary lawgiver that the *nigama* framed its own rules known as *samayas*,[3] and that the king was under the obligation to maintain the usages settled among them in both open and fortified settlements.[4] This suggests that *nigamas* in Vaiśālī enjoyed a large measure of autonomy.

In regard to north Bengal the Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscriptions give clear indication of the participation of representatives of traders and artisans in the municipal management of those towns. According to them affairs at the headquarters of the Koṭivarṣa *viṣaya* (district) in Puṇḍravardhanabhukti were not the sole responsibility of the district governor but of the local merchants and traders who were possibly recognised

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1. *ASIR.* 1903-4, p. 110.
2. Ibid., p. 104.
3. *Nārada*, X. 1.
4. Ibid., X. 2.

for the purpose by the *uparika*.[1] Thus we hear of the *nagara-śreṣṭhi* Ṛbhupāla, the *sārthavāha* Vasumitra, the *prathamakulika* Varadatta and the *prathamakāyastha* Viprapāla.[2] All these served on the district committee at least for four years, for which epigraphic records are available. This certainly is no indication of the length or basis of their tenure. Along with the *āyuktaka* the functionaries counted five, which number was coming into use in both the rural and urban areas. It is clear that elements of trade and industry were fairly represented in local administration. The titles *pāla*, *mitra*, *datta* are still common in Bengal, and on this basis we could not tell that only brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas manned the district managing committee.

VI

The machinery for maintaining law and order in Gupta times was based on the office of the *daṇḍanāyaka*, the *dāṇḍika*, and the *daṇḍapāśika*. The first seems to have been a high executive officer in command of sufficient force. This office was especially popular in Bihar and U.P. As many as eight Gupta seals of these *daṇḍanāyakas* have been discovered from Bhīṭā.[3] Seals of *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* have been found at both Bhīṭā[4] and Vaiśālī.[5] Some holders of this post inherited it from their father, as can be seen in the case of Hariṣeṇa. Essentially the *dāṇḍika*, *daṇḍa-pāśika* and *daṇḍanāyaka*, all seem to have performed police and magisterial functions. The emphasis on the role of the *daṇḍa* and *dāṇḍika* given in the law-book of Manu would suggest that their functions were negative, to punish those who broke the established laws. The police work was performed by the *daṇḍapāśika*, whose office *adhikaraṇa* is mentioned in a Vaiśālī seal.[6] The Orissa *daṇḍausī*, literally derived from *daṇḍapāśika*, functions as a village watchman who seems to be a poor survival of his Gupta predecessor. Another officer charged with this

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1. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III. no. 36, ll. 1-4.
2. Ibid., ll. 3-4.
3. *ASR*, 1911-1912, pp. 54-55.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 1903-4, p. 109.
6. *ASR*, 1903-4, p. 108.

duty in the rural areas was the *cauroddharaṇika*, the predecessor of the medieval *chaudhari* who maintained law and order as one of the leading landed magnets. The title still prevalent in north India is shorn of all prestige and power. In towns the magisterial function was discharged by the *vinayasthitisthāpaka*, who had certainly his office in the headquarters of Tīrabhukti, and possibly in other provincial headquarters.

Most officers mentioned above appear in late Gupta land grants. Since land disputes would disturb the peace and stability of the villages they were notified of all important changes in its transfer and possession.

The Gupta period marks a landmark in the history of the administration of law and justice in early India. It produced a rich corpus of legal literature, which reflects a distinct advance in the legal system. For the first time the lawgivers of the period draw a clear line between what may be regarded as civil and criminal law. Bṛhaspati enumerates eighteen titles of law and adds that fourteen of these have their origin in property (*dhanamūla*) and four in injury (*hiṃsāmūla*).[1] The first might be compared to the *dharmasthīya* section of Kauṭilya and the second to his *kaṇṭakaśodhana* section. But while the administration of criminal law seems to be important in Kauṭilya that of civil law is important in Bṛhaspati. On account of the growth of private property in land[2] which was sold for money in Gupta times, we find very detailed laws about partition, sale, mortage and lease of land in Gupta law-books. All this shows considerable progress of rational trends, but curiously enough superstitions invade the judicial procedure. Manu[3] prescribes only two types of ordeal, Yājñavalkya[4] and Nārada[5] raise the number to five, and Bṛhaspati[6] to nine. Whether this was done deliberately or to accommodate tribal peoples with their beliefs in different ordeals cannot be said, but the development will strike anybody who cares to glance through the law codes. Many of these ordeals may not have actually come off, for the criminal would break down in defence and thus help the course of justice.

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1. II, 5.
2. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 145-52.
3. VIII. 114.
4. II. 95.
5. I. 252.
6. X. 4.

The legal texts of Gupta times lay down detailed rules about the constitution of court and the law of evidence. The king is asked to decide suits with the help of at least three *sabhyas*, his preference being not limited to brāhmaṇas though śūdras are to be carefully excluded. Unfortunately land grants do not throw any clear light on the composition of these courts. But the term *adhikaraṇa*, used to describe in inscriptions a managing committee of eight at the district (*viṣaya*) headquarters (*adhiṣṭhāna*) or at the village level, or a committee at the *vīthī* level, is also understood in the sense of a judicial court in the literary texts of the 7th century. The *Mṛcchakaṭika* describes a judicial court consisting of the *adhikaraṇika*, the *śreṣthi* and the kāyastha,[1] which partly answers to the epigraphic description of the committee which not only mentions its *nagara-śreṣṭhi* and *prathamakāyastha* members but also its *sārthavāha* and *prathamakulika*. It is therefore likely that the local bodies of five, eight or eleven, as the case may be in the *viṣaya*, the village or the *vīthī*, also decided local disputes relating to land and other matters.

Civil courts seem to have functioned at important administrative centres. Two seals from Nālandā containing the term *dharmādhikaraṇa* (in one case the name Śrī Śīlāditya is also mentioned)[2] seem to be of this type and indicate that Nālandā was the headquarters of some kind of civil court.

The law-books provide for a hierarchy of local courts, which are to be recognised but not established by the king. Yājñavalkya and Bṛhaspati mention three grades of local courts, *kula*, *śreṇi* and *puga*, and Bṛhaspati adds that the appeal shall lie to the higher court in the same order.[3] Kātyāyana introduces *gaṇa* in place of *puga* and adds in the same ascending order two other courts, namely an authorised person and the king.[4] According to the law-book farmers, artisans, traders, etc., can have their courts, which are empowered to decide on all matters relating to these groups of people. Kātyāyana advises artisans,

1. *Bṛhaspati*, l. 28-30.
2. *MASI*, no. 66, p. 53. Except the seals of the Gupta kings which can be clearly identified, Gupta and post-Gupta seals of Nālandā have been uncritically mixed up in *MASI*, no. 66. The two can be separated from one another on the basis of palaeography.
3. *Bṛhaspati*, l. 28-30.
4. Verse 82.

farmers, etc., to get their disputes decided by their *mahattaras*, who are repeatedly mentioned as elders or village headmen in Gupta inscriptions. The epigraphic *aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa* relating to villages was evidently the counterpart of the *kula* court mentioned in the Gupta law-books. At any rate the legal texts leave the impression that professional associations functioned as courts of justice, which obviated the necessity of providing royal justice.

Towards the end of the Gupta period corporations of merchants were granted considerable autonomy by royal charters. This is illustrated by the charters of Viṣṇuṣena issued in A.D. 592 in western India. It exempted the traders from various dues, left them free to deal with labourers, herdsmen, etc., and authorised them to impose forced labour on certain artisans.[1] The traders were allowed immunity from the entry of royal officials in their area and from payment of dues and rations for supporting these officials.[2] Such charters are not known to northern India, but may not have been altogether absent.

VII

The system of administration underwent several changes under the Guptas, but the most striking developments related to the grant of fiscal and administrative immunities to the beneficiaries and to the establishment of relations with the subjugated princes called feudatories. In grants, from the time of Pravarasena II Vākāṭaka onwards (5th century A.D.), the ruler gave up his control over almost all sources of revenue, including pasturage, hides and charcoal, mines for the production of salt, forced labour, and all hidden treasures and deposits.[3] The *Raghuvaṃśa* states that, among other things, mines constitute the wages (*vetana*) of the king for protecting the earth.[4] According to some grants of the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. the brāhmaṇas were granted the right of enjoying the hidden treasures and deposits of the village[5]; this meant the transfer of royal

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1. *EI*, xxx, 163 181; *JESHO*, ii, 281-293.
2. *EI*, xxx, no. 36, l. 6
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 62, ll. 26-29.
4. XVII. 66.
5. *CII* iii, no. 41, l. 8; *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 62, l. 29.

ownership over mines, which was an important sign of the king's sovereignty.

Equally important is the fact that the donor abandoned the right to govern the inhabitants of the villages that were granted. The Gupta period furnishes at least half a dozen examples of grants of apparently settled villages made to the brāhmaṇas by the big feudatories in central India in which the residents, including the cultivators and artisans, were expressly asked by their respective rulers not only to pay the customary taxes to the donees but also to obey their commands. In two other land grants of post-Gupta times royal commands were issued to government officials employed as *sarvādhyakṣa* and also to regular soldiers and umbrella-bearers that they should not cause any disturbance to the brāhmaṇas.[1] All this provides clear evidence of the surrender of the administrative power of the state.

Till the 5th century A.D. the ruler generally retained the right to punish thieves, which was one of the main bases of the state power. The process of disintegration reached its logical end when in later times the king made over to the brāhmaṇas not only this right, but also his right to punish all offences against family, property, person, etc. In central and western India some royal donors conferred upon the grantees the right of trying cases in the donated villages. Their grants use the term *abhyantara-siddhi*[2], which has been interpreted variously.[3] It makes sense if we take it as adjudication of internal disputes in the village,[4] which is thus made completely self-dependent. Apparently this technical expression is the counterpart of *sa-daṇḍa-daś = āparādhaḥ* used in north Indian grants. But while the later limits the grantee's jurisdiction to criminal cases,[5] the former extends it to civil cases, so that armed with such powers the donees could turn the benefices into practically independent pockets.

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1. R. S. Sharma, "*Politico-Legal Aspect of the Caste System*", *JBRS*, xxxix, 325.
2. *abhyantara siddhikāḥ*, *CII*, iv, no. 31, l. 41.
3. *CII*, iv, 154 fn. 1.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., iii, 189-90, fn. 4.

As a result of land grants made to the brāhmaṇas the "comprehensive competence based on centralised control", which was the hall-mark of the Maurya state, gave way to decentralisation in the post-Maurya and Gupta periods. The functions of the collection of taxes, levy of forced labour, regulation of mines, agriculture, etc., together with those of the maintenance of law and order, and defence, which were hitherto performed by the state officials, were now step by step abanddoned, first to the priestly class, and later to the warrior class.

Gupta grants from Bengal and central India confer the right of enjoying the revenues from land in perpetuity on the beneficiary, but they do not authorise him to alienate or grant his rents or land to others. Perhaps the earliest record of this type comes from Indore in central India where an inscription of A.D. 397 records the consent of one Mahārāja Svāmidāsa, probably a feudatory of the Imperial Guptas, to the grant of a field by a merchant.[1] The fact that Svāmidāsa was empowered to endorse the religious grant made by an individual in his jurisdiction suggests that as a feudatory he himself could make religious grants without royal consent. But neither in this case nor in the case of other Gupta feudatories such as the Parivrājaka and Ucchakalpas, who granted several villages, is there anything to show that they held land of the king. Thus these grants do not illustrate true subinfeudation. However, the Indore grant authorises the grantee to enjoy the field, cultivate it and get it cultivated so long as he observes the conditions of the *brahmadeya* grant.[2] This leaves clear scope for creating tenants on the donated land and provides perhaps the earliest epigraphic evidence of the subinfeudation of the soil. Although examples of this type are not found in other parts of the country, we have here the beginning of the process of subinfeudation which continued in the western part of central India in the 5th century A.D. and characterised the grants of the Valabhī rulers to their donees in the 6th and 7th centuries.

Significantly enough the heart of the Gupta empire, which covered the modern states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal,

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1. *EI*, no. 16, ll. 1 9. It is not quiet clear whether the merchant was the donor.

2. *ucitayā brahmadeyabhuktyā bhuñjataḥ kṛṣataḥ kṛṣāpayataś ca.* Ibid., ll. 6-7.

hardly knows of any grant of village or land made by any feudatory chief without royal consent, all such grants being confined to the periphery of this area in the outlying regions whose chiefs owed only nominal allegiance to the Imperial Guptas. Only towards the end of the rule of the Imperial Guptas such practices appeared in the kernel of their empire. The *kumārāmātya-mahārāja* Nandana granted a village in the modern Gaya District in the middle of the 6th centnry A.D.[1] although this seemed to have been a royal prerogative of the Imperial Guptas in earlier times. However, we hear of some *āgrahārikas*, who seem to have been religious beneficiaries enjoying revenue-free villages. They are mentioned in a Gupta grant of the late 5th century, and we also hear of a brāhmaṇa *āgrahārika* being granted some land in south Monghyr[2] in the sixth century. Apparently the *āgrahārika* maintained some staff for collecting various dues from the inhabitants of the gift villages, although even the forged grants of Samudra Gupta assignable to the 7th century do not allow any administrative functions to the grantees in Magadha, as is the case with religious grants made by the feudatories of the Guptas in Madhya Pradesh. The jurisdiction of the *āgrahārika* in Bihar was far more limited than that of his counterpart in central India. An important condition imposed on him was that he would not introduce any tax-payng peasants and artisans from another village in his *agrahāra* otherwise it would constitute an infringement of the endowment. The beneficiary of the *agrahāra* enjoyed a free hand in the management of the affairs of the village so granted to him, for in one case it is laid down that no trouble should be caused to him by the descendants of the grantee.[1]

Land grants giving rise to feudal conditions are typical in Gupta times of these areas which were forested and mountainous and hence less exposed to commerce and the use of money. Most coins issued by the Gupta kings have been found in the plains

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1. *JASB*, NS, v (1909), 164; EI, x, 12.

2. *EI*, xiii, no. 8, l. 3. The charter is couched in the same terms as the land grants of north Bengal, but the donee was local, and so also seems to have been the donor for he describes himself simply as *viṣayapati* Chhatramaha suggesting thereby that he is well known in the area to which the donee belongs.

3. Ibid., x, no. 12, l. 6.

and only a few in Madhya Pradesh. If the Parivrājaka and Uccakalpa princes could issue land charters without the consent of the Gupta sovereign, they could surely issue coins as did the vassals of the Sātavāhanas. But none of their coins have been found so far. Evidently religious or other services were paid by land grants mainly in those areas which suffered from lack of money.

According to the charters in return for land grants the priests were obliged to render religious services, which might secure the spiritual welfare of the donors or their ancestors. The secular obligations of the priestly beneficiaries are rarely laid down; the only example is the Chammak copper-plate of the Vākāṭaka king Pravarsena II, which imposes certain obligations on one thousand brāhmaṇas who are granted one village.[1] It enjoins that they shall not conspire against the king and the kingdom, commit theft and adultery, slay brāhmaṇas, and poison kings, etc. ; further they shall not wage war and do wrong to other villages.[2] All these are negative obligations, which imply that the priests enjoyed the land on condition that they would not act in opposition to the established social and political system. These were probably taken for granted on the part of the religious beneficiaries in other charters. But it is natural to expect that the brāhmaṇas more than repaid their generous donors and patrons by maintaining law and order in the areas under their charge and impressing upon the people the sacred duty of carrying out their varṇa functions and of obeying the king, who from the Gupta period was represented as embodying in his person the attributes of various gods. Hence whatever may have been the intentions of the donors, it would be wrong to think that these grants served only religious purposes. Certainly the priests prayed for the spiritual well-being of the donors and their ancestors, and never supplied any soldiers as the bishops did in England, but where was the need for military service if the people could be persuaded to behave themselves and to acquiesce in the existing order ?

Epigraphic land grants made to officers for their military and administrative services are lacking, although such a possi-

1. *CII*, iii, no. 55.
2. Ibid., ll. 39-43.

bility cannot be entirely ruled out. Manu's recommendation for the payment of fiscal officers by grants of land[1] is repeated by the lawgivers of Gupta times. In the 5th century Bṛhaspati, while defining *prasāda-likhita*, a writing of favour, states that such a grant is made by the king when, pleased with the services, valour, etc., of a person, he grants him a district or the like.[2]

Some inscriptions of the Gupta period show that villages were granted to secular parties, who administered them for religious purposes. Under the Sātavāhanas and Kuṣāṇas cash endowments were made to the guilds of artisans for meeting religious needs, but under the Guptas land endowments were made to officials and others for the same purpose. A very early instance is found in central India in A.D. 496-7 in a grant made by the Uccakalpa *māhārāja* Jayanātha.[3] A village was granted as an *agrahāra* to a scribe (*divira*) and his son and two grandsons, who were to manage it for religious purposes.[4] The inhabitants were asked to pay *bhāga*, *bhoga*, *kara*, *hiraṇya*, etc., to the beneficiaries and to carry out their orders. but the donor retained the right of punishing the thieves.[5] These concessions may not have been always utilised by the secular trustees in the interests of religion, and less so by the scribes whose oppressions were proverbial. Whether the scribe was placed in charge of the endowment to supplement his remuneration for secular services is not clear, but in practice he may not have missed the opportunity of lining his pockets.

In the same area several other similar grants were made by Śarvanātha, the son of Jayanātha. Thus in A. D. 512-3 Śarvanātha granted a village in four shares, two of which belonged to Viṣṇunandin, another to the merchant Śaktināga and another to Kumāranāga and Skandanāga.[6] The village was given with *udaṅga* and *uparikara* and was not to be entered by the irregular or regular troops[7]—an important administrative immunity which does not occur in the grant cited above. It

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1. VII. 115-20.
2. Quoted in *Vyavahāramayūkha* (tr. P. V. Kane & S. G. Patwardhan), pp.25-7.
3. *CII*, iii, no. 27.
4. Ibid., ll. 5-11.
5. Ibid., ll. 11-14.
6. Ibid., no. 28, ll. 1-17.
7. Ibid., ll. 9·10.

is obvious that here the immediate beneficiaries were the secular parties, whose descendants were authorised to enjoy the grant in perpetuity.[1] But the ultimate beneficiaries were the two gods for whose worship and for the repairs of whose shrines this grant was made with the agreement between the donor and the donee.[2] At any rate it is clear that the fiscal and administrative rights were to be exercised by the secular beneficiaries, and only the proceeds were to be enjoyed by the temples. A grant of half of a village on similar terms was made by the same king to a person called Choḍugomika, again a secular party, who agreed with the donor that the endowment would be utilised for the worship of the goddess Piṣṭapurikādevī and the repairs of her temple.[3] All these grants give the impression that secular parties functioned as managers of the villages which were to be enjoyed by the temples.

But a writ of A.D. 533-34 made by the same king leaves no doubt that land grants were made even independently to secular parties. According to it two villages were bestowed as a mark of favour in perpetuity with the fiscal and administrative rights mentioned above upon a person called Pulindabhaṭa,[4] who seems to have been an aboriginal chief; it is certain that before their transfer Pulindabhaṭa held the two villages on the strength of a purely secular charter. Other secular assignments may have been made in the Gupta period, but since they were not connected with religious donations they were not recorded on lasting material such as stone and copper.

Certain designations of the administrative officers and units of the Gupta period suggest that land revenues were granted for remunerating government services. The titles *bhogika* and *bhogapatika* suggest that these officers were assigned offices not so much for exercising royal authority over the subjects and working for their welfare as for enjoying the revenues. Sometimes the *bhogika* held the office of *amātya* also.[5] We wonder wųether in such a case the office of the *bhogika* was meant to remunerate its holder for his functions pertaining to the other

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1. Ibid., ll, 12-13.
2. Ibid., ll. 13-16.
3. Ibid., no. 29, ll. 1-12.
4. Ibid., no. 31, ll. 1-10.
5. Ibid., no. 23, ll. 18-20; 26, ll. 22-23.

office. Further, the office of the *bhogika* was generally hereditary, for at least three generations of *bhogikas* are mentioned in several cases.[1] All these factors must have naturally rendered the *bhogika* a powerful overlord, comparatively free from the control of the central authority. The *bhogapatika* is mentioned as one of about a dozen officers stationed in Vardhamāna *bhukti*, when the *mahārāja* Vijayasena was ruling there as a vassal of the *mahārājādhirāja* Śrī Gopacandra about A.D. 507.[2] It has been rightly suggested that this officer was probably a *jāgīrdār*.[3]

The process of conquest, by which smaller chiefs were reduced to subordination and reinstated in their positions provided they paid regular tributes and did homage, contributed in large measure to the growth of feudal relations. It reached its culmination with Samudra Gupta, whose whirlwind conquests of vast areas led to the establishment of such relations on a much wider scale and provided a pattern for his successors. The obligations of the feudatories towards the sovereign are clearly set forth in the Allahabad Inscription, which shows that in return for being restored to their thrones the conquered and subjugated princes were expected to pay all tributes, to carry out royal orders, to give their daughters in marriage, and to render homage to the conqueror.[4]

The term *sāmanta* is not used for the conquered feudatories of Samudra Gupta. In the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the inscriptions of Aśoka[5] this term meant independent neighbours. In post-Maurya law-books it was used in the sense of a neighbouring proprietor of land.[6] It was from the fifth century A.D. that the term *sāmanta* was used in the sense of vassal in south India, for the phrase *sāmanta-cūḍāmaṇayaḥ* appears in a Pallava inscription of the time of Śāntivarman (c. A.D.455-70).[7] The term occurs in some grants of southern and western India of the same century in the sense of vassal.[8] In north India the

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1. Ibid., iii, no. 26, ll. 22-23.
2. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 46, ll. 3-4.
3. Ibid., p. 360, fn. 9.
4. LI. 22-24.
5. *AŚ*, I, 6; P. E, II. l. 5.
6. *Manu* [SBE], VIII. 286-9; *Yāj*, ll. 152 53.
7. R. B. Panday, *Historical and Literary Inscriptions* no. 29, l. 31.
8. These instances have been collected by L. Gopal, in "Sāmanta-its varying Significance in Ancient India", *JRAS*, pts. 1 & 2, April 1963.

earliest uses of the term in a similar sense seem to have been in a Bengal inscription, and in the Barabar Hill Cave Inscription of the Maukhari chief Anantavarman, in which his father is described as *sāmanta-cūḍāmaṇiḥ* ("the best among feudatories").[1] Paleographically this inscription is placed earlier than A.D. 554, the date of the Harahā Inscription,[2] and hence the date of Anantavarman's father may be put around A.D. 500, when the Maukharis served as the *sāmantas* of the Imperial Guptas. The term *sāmanta* is also found in the Mandasor Stone Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman (*c.* A.D. 525-535), in which he claims to have subjugated the *sāmantas* (feudatories) in the whole of northern India.[3] During the 6th century A.D. the rulers of Valabhī bore the title of *sāmanta-mahārāja* and *mahāsāmanta*. Gradually the application of the term *sāmanta* was extended from defeated chiefs to royal officials. Thus, in the inscriptions dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era, from A.D. 597 onwards *rājās* and *sāmantas* took the place of *uparikas* and *kumārāmātyas*.[4] In the sixth century A.D. several inscripions from northern and western India know of the *sāmanta* as a vassal. Although the term does not occur in the records issued by the Gupta emperors, we may certainly assume that the *sāmanta* was an important link in the feudatory organisation of the later half of the Gupta period.

The contrast between the Maurya and the Gupta system of administration is evident. In spite of divine elements being attributed to him the Gupta king was not so powerful as his Maurya counterpart. His army, bureaucracy and taxation machinery were not as elaborate as that of the Mauryas. Officials tended to be hereditary and stronger through occasional grants of land revenues. The Gupta rulers in both rural and urban areas initiated the first systematic provincial and local administration, with which landed, military and professional interests were associated. The period marked the sudden elevation of the village administration to a high position of authority. This was a necessary concomitant of the reduction of the bureaucratic

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1. *CII*, iii, no. 49, l. 4.
2. R. G. Basak, *The History of N. E. India*, p. 105.
3. *Sel. Inscrr.*, III, no. 54, verse 5.
4. *CII*, iv, Introd., p. clxi.

staff. Local elements also played an important part in the administration of law and justice which seem to have been far more organised in this than in an earlier period.

The two most striking developments of the period were the grants of whole villages to religious beneficiaries by the feudatories of the Guptas in central India with fiscal and administrative concessions and the establishment of unilateral contractual relations with the conquered princes by the Gupta emperors. On the whole we notice distinct feudal traits in the Gupta system of administration which prepared the way for a complete feudal structure in subsequent times.

Chapter XVII

STAGES IN ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY : VEDIC AND POST-VEDIC

I

The Ṛg Vedic Phase : Tribal Military Democracy

The political organisation of Ṛg Vedic times cannot be followed in isolation from the material and social life of the people who evolved it. Unfortunately the archaeological chasing of the Āryans in India has proved to be futile, and no material remains unearthed so far can be attributed with confidence to the Ṛg Vedic people. In spite of diligent digging during the last twenty years or so our main source for the reconstruction of the picture of the material life of the earliest Aryans in India continues to be literary.

If we rely on the *Ṛg Veda* the chief material element which distinguished the new-comers from the Harappa people or their other predecessors was the possession of horse and chariots. Those who possessed and fought from chariots drawn by horses obviously constituted the ruling aristocracy, as was the case with the Mitannis and the Hyksos. On the other hand ordinary soldiers in possession of horse formed the rank and file of society.

Chariot-makers play an important part in the social organisation of Vedic times, but we have no idea of the material of which the chariots were made; their metal fittings, if any, have not been discovered so far.

The Ṛg Vedic people knew the use of a metal called *ayas*, but whether it was copper or bronze cannot be said. It is thought that they used bronze, and this may be expected in view of the use of this metal on a large scale in Persia from about 1200 B.C. But only one or two objects found in the land of seven rivers can be ascribed to the period of the *Ṛg Veda*, and as such they are not sufficient to establish the use of bronze on any considerable scale. Since the colour of *ayas* is described as reddish, it seems to have been copper. It seems that their

arrows were made of copper (*ayomukham*), and on the whole in spite of their possession of horse their tools and weapons would not enable them to form large empires, leading to developed state organisation.

The Ṛg Vedic people were a semi-nomadic people more in the pastoral stage, and without the knowledge of iron did not practise effective plough cultivation. Cattle rearing was a more important source of livelihood than agriculture, and cattle and bullocks formed their most valued possessions. The influence of cattle-rearing is writ large upon their social and military organisation. Thus people who lived with their cows under the same cowshed came to belong to the same *gotra*, which did not indicate descent from the same ancestor in the age of the *Ṛg Veda*. Again, since cattle formed the main bone of contention in tribal wars, the word for fight came to be known as *gaviṣṭhi*, a search for cows.

Because of their living in the semi-nomadic stage and constantly engaged in fighting for the sake of cows they had to be mobile. This naturally prevented them from forming stable kingdoms and at the same time did not allow their social relations to be rigid and stratified. Under the circumstances small tribal principalities had to be the rule of the day.

The social organisation of the Ṛg Vedic people had not transcended the tribal stage. Kinship formed the basis of the social structure. The predominance of the tribal life is indicated by the frequent use of two terms *jana* and *viś* in the *Ṛg Veda*. The first occurs about 275 times in that text, and the second about 170 times. We also come across the term *pañca-janāḥ* in the sense of five tribes. The Vedic *jana* was the highest social unit, and it corresponded to the Roman *gens* and Greek *genos*.

The *jana* was split up into *viś* ; the former stood for the whole tribe and the latter for the clan. We do not have its duplicate in Indo-European languages. We are not quite sure whether the Vedic *viś* corresponded to the Roman *tribus* and the Greek *phylae*. But there is no doubt that the *viś* was a fighting unit similar to the fighting groups of kinsmen in Homeric Greek and ancient Germany.

It is suggested that the *viś* was divided into *grāmas*, but this division was not widely prevalent because *grāma* figures only

13 times in the *Ṛg Veda*. In this period *grāma* is not ordinarily used in the sense of village but in that of small tribal fighting groups, who were mobilised together for purposes of war (*saṃgrāma*).

Family may have been the lowest tribal unit, but it was not a well-rooted institution and certainly not a small monogamous unit as we understand it today. The word *kula*, family, is not mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda* independently. It however forms part of the term *kulapā*, head of family, which occurs only once in the *Ṛg Veda*. But even *kulapā* is represented as a fighter and not as an ordinary householder. We have no idea of the size to which the Ṛg Vedic family could grow and keep together. It was a large patriarchal family in which probably members of three generations lived under the same roof.

The patriarchal aspect of the Ṛg Vedic family does not need any emphasis. Desire is expressed for *prajā*, which might include both boys and girls. But really people were keen on having brave sons (*suvīrāḥ*) who might fight their wars. However, it would be wrong to exaggerate the patriarchal character of the Ṛg Vedic society. Although the term father or *pitā* is mentioned 335 times in the *Ṛg Veda*, the term mother *mātā* is mentioned 234 times. Further, we have several goddesses which suggests the importance of woman. In some cases a woman could freely carry on love affairs. She could take part in sacrifices along with her husband, and some women are credited with the authorship of the Vedic mantras. Clearly in ṚgVedic times mother-right was not completely submerged by father-right, and this is reflected in the composition of tribal assemblies.

Social classes either based on hereditary occupation or on the appropriation of the surplus produced by the peasants and artisans had not clearly emerged in the age of the *Ṛg Veda*. Members of the same family followed different occupations. In one case the father was a priest, the mother a grinder of corn, and the son a physician, and yet all lived together happily. The term *varṇa* is mentioned only 23 times in the *Ṛg Veda*, but not always in the sense of social order or estate. Although warriors and priests tended to separate from the tribal fraternity the four varṇas did not exist as well-defined social classes. In the *Ṛg Veda* the term brāhmaṇa is mentioned 15 times and kṣatriya 9 times, and vaiśya and śūdra each only once. Naturally the

political organisation of the period is generally free from discrimination based on varṇa.

What caused inequality in Ṛg Vedic society was the subjection of defeated peoples. The conquerors acquired and maintained a large number of *dāsas*, especially female, whom they gave away to priests. But even the conquerors were possibly divided into the ruling group equipped with chariots and the common tribal kinsmen who just followed their elders. This disparity contributed to the growth of the power of chiefs and was occasionally reflected in the structure of the Ṛg Vedic assemblies.

With the material and social life sketched above the Ṛg Vedic people were not capable of developing any advanced political structure which can be called state either in the ancient Indian or the modern sense of the term. The land of the seven rivers, covering the area of the Panjab and parts of Western U.P., lay in possession of small tribal principalities, five of whom are known by the name of *pañcajanāḥ*. Although the term *rājan* is used for the Ṛg Vedic princes,the nature of the Ṛg Vedic kingship was basically different from the type of monarchy that developed from later Vedic times. It was not a territorial monarchy in which all inhabitants of territory, rich or poor, high or low, regard the monarch as the symbol of authority over the country to which they belong. The Ṛg Vedic princes fought for cows and not for territory. The terms for territory are not common in that text. Although the term *jana* is used 275 times, the term *janapada* is not used even once. The term *rājya* occurs only once, and the word *rāṣṭra* figures 10 times in all. Only in the latest portions of the *Ṛg Veda*, in BK X, the king is asked to uphold the *rāṣṭra* or kingdom,[1] which suggests that the territorial idea appears at the end of the period. The term *grāma* occurs 13 times in the *Ṛg Veda*, but not in the sense of village. Originally it meant a tribal unit mobilised for fighting, so that the *vrajapati*, who was in charge of the pasture grounds held in common by the tribe and who naturally led family heads to battle for capturing cows, became later identical with the *grāmaṇi*. The *grāmaṇi* was originally not the head of the village but of the tribal unit called *grāma*. He cannot be identified with any official whose title may suggest any territorial

1. *RV*, X. 173. 1 and 2.

administration. All this is sufficient to demonstrate that the Ṛg Vedic chiefs did not think in terms of territorial states.

The Ṛg Vedic kingship was primarily a tribal institution. The king or the *rājan* is repeatedly connected with the tribe. Basically he rules over his people or *jana* and is therefore called their protector—*gopa janasya* or *gopati janasya*. The terms *gopa* or *gopati* signify that human headship over the herds of cattle was gradually extended over the tribe or the people.

The tribal character is also disclosed by the application of Caidya to Kasu, of Sṛñjaya to Daivavāta, and of Uśīnarāni to the queen of Uśīnaras.[1] Princes and princesses were therefore known by the tribes to which they belonged.

The Ṛg Vedic king was one of the equals whose hereditary position was not beyond question. Several passages suggest that the king owed his office to the choice of his people. A passage from the tenth Book of the *Ṛg Veda* uses the simile "like subjects choosing their king."[2] The coronation hymn from the same Book suggests the acceptance of the king by all the tribe (*viśaḥ*).[3] Most references to the election of the king by the tribesmen are found in the *Atharva Veda*,[4] but it is obvious that the practice must have begun much earlier. The fact of formal sanction implied by the hymn shows that at the earlier stage the right of election was exercised by the tribe.

On the other hand some references suggest that kingship was confined to certain families.[5] Trasadasyu inherited the kingship of his tribe from his grandfather, his father having lost his throne through an enemy attack. The family of Sudās had enjoyed royal authority for three generations. Thus actual examples do not confirm the practice of royal succession in one family for more than three generations. Evidently the principle of heredity from father to son, based on the law of primogeniture, was not established in the oldest period.[6] A similar situation obtained among the Grecian *genos* in the Homeric age.

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1 Bandyopadhaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Poltical Theories*, p. 85, fn.

2. X. 124. 8.

3. *viśastvā sarvā vāṃchaṃtu*, X. 173. 1ff.

4. Quoted in K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, ch. XXIII, and Bandyopadhaya, op. cit., pp. 88-91.

5. Bandyopadhaya op. cit., p. 85.

6. Ibid., p. 86.

Clearly the law of primogeniture was not sharply defined in the age of the *Ṛg Veda*, and if it is not defined it is as good as none at all.

Lack of strong hereditary succession did not allow the king to gather too much power. Royal authority was materially circumscribed by the tribal assemblies, especially the *sabhā* and the *samiti*, which we have considered separately[1]. The *rājan* had also to reckon with the power and prestige of the *purohita* who accompanied him to battle and boosted his morale with spells and prayers. Several passages in the *Ṛg Veda* advise the king to give special attention and protection to the brāhmaṇa or priest, so that everything goes well with him and he wins the riches of his enemies and his kinsmen. But these pious wishes do not necessarily indicate royal dependence on priestly support. In fact the days of priestly domination were yet to come.

But constant wars added to the power of the tribal chief, who consequently commanded the services of a large number of slaves (*dāsas*). Out of the spoils of war the *rājans* offered to priests rich and varied presents consisting of cows, horses, chariots, blocks of gold and beautifully dressed women slaves. On their part the priests reciprocated with developing the system of a formal consecration and laudatory hymns called *dānastuti*, which enhanced the royal prestige and spread the myth of royal supremacy among the conquered subjects and the fellow tribesmen alike.

Acquisition of wealth enabled the tribal chiefs to live better than the common people. Perhaps they dwelt in well-built palaces, but in spite of literary hyperboles we cannot visualise any grand buildings unless we come down to the Maurya period, which ushers in the use of burnt bricks in the country after their disuse for about 2000 years.

With the resources and the technological knowledge they possessed the Ṛg Vedic people could not support a large administrative machinery. Pastoral communities in the main, their primitive agriculture could not afford too many officials. The only surplus that could be disbursed for the maintenance of the king and his officials was received in the form of *bali*, literally offering. This term occurs several times in the *Ṛg Veda* in the

1. Supra, Ch. VII.

sense of tribute to a prince or offering to a god.[1] In the former sense it forms part of the compound *balihṛt*, paying tribute, which is applied to (king) Nahuṣa in the earlier portion and to the tribes in the latest portions of the *Ṛg Veda*.[2] The tribute was received in kind, probably from the conquered peoples as well as the clansmen of the king. Hostile tribes defeated in battle were forced to pay *bali* or some kind of tribute. By its very nature this was obligatory, but there is nothing to show that it was regular. Tribesmen led to victory by their chiefs may have offered in gratitude some voluntary presents to the latter, but these were neither assessed and collected regularly nor formed any fixed part of their agricultural produce. The *Ṛg Veda* does not mention any official meant for collecting taxes, although this is considered to be the most important function of a state. In short the system of taxation was not known to the Ṛg Vedic society.

Similarly although we come across a functionary called *senānī*, evidence for a regular standing army supported by the taxes collected by the king is lacking. The term *senā* is mentioned 20 times in the *Ṛg Veda*, but it seems to have been an improvised affair mobilised out of the tribesmen whenever occasion demanded it. Military functions were an important concern of the Vedic assemblies, attended by members of the tribe. Evidently tribal people were generally armed and mustered in times of need. Some of them who possessed chariots and possibly bronze weapons were better armed, but otherwise the distinction was not sharp. Those engaged in comparatively peaceful occupations such as *vrajapati*, head of the pasture ground, and *kulapā*, head of family, appear as military functionaries; the former led the latter to battle. The *grāmaṇī* also performed a similar function. The state therefore did not have permanent military officials to meet its military needs. Perhaps *purpatis*, commanders of mud forts or strongholds, would have some permanent responsibility for defence, otherwise the military organisation would be very simple.

Because of certain crimes arising out of the encroachment on private property it was necessary to have a few police officials.

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1. I. 70 9; V. l. 10.
2. VII. 6. 5; X. 173. 6.

Forcible occupation of other's land is not mentioned, but cases of theft, burglary, highway robbery, cheating at gambling, and above all cattle lifting are reported. The king employed spies called *spasa* to keep an eye over the conduct of the people. *Ugra*[1] and *jīvagṛbha*[2] were probably officials meant for dealing with the criminals, and the *madhyamaśī* seems to have acted as a mediator in disputes.

However, punishments were not attended with such severity as appeared in later times. A wergeld of 100 cows had to be given for killing a man, and in cases of theft also the principle underlying the penality was to secure the satisfaction of the person who was wronged. In post-Vedic times theft was punished even with death, but in the Ṛg Vedic age the sanctity of private property had not reached the stage which would warrant such a drastic penalty. In short the coercive apparatus was not so well organised and oppressive in this period.

State officials whom we may describe as civil were not too many. About half a dozen functionaries such as the crowned queen known as *mahiṣī* (the powerful one),[3] the *purohita*, treasurer, the charioteer who originally distributed royal goods and favour, the *takṣan* (the carpenter whose implement was the axe)[4] and the *dūta*[5] or messenger are mentioned. All these appear in the list of *ratnins* in the later Vedic period. This also includes the Ṛg Vedic *senānī*, who was not without some civil functions. In view of the importance of chariots in the Ṛg Vedic state the charioteer occupies a high place even in the kernel of the *Ṛg Veda*. Nevertheless in this period we have a rudimentary apparatus to meet the bare minimum needs of government. We do not hear of any code of laws, which came to be embodied in the Dharmaśāstras from post-Vedic times; nor do we meet with any class of officers to administer justice. In spite of all talk of *ṛt* and *vrata* the Ṛg Vedic chief did not enforce any civil code overriding customary tribal law. Since the tribal assemblies functioned with vigour and looked after the tribal affairs, not much was left to the royal responsibility, and this accounts for a small number of officials.

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1. *RV*, VII. 38· 6. 2; X. 97. 11.
2. *RV*, X. 97. 22.
3. *RV*, V. 37. 3.
4. *VI*, i, 297.
5. Ibid., 371.

It has been shown earlier that such tribal assemblies as the *sabhā*, *samiti*, *gaṇa* and *vidatha* played an important part in the life of the early Vedic people. The first two had definite political functions to perform, and the *rājan* could not run the government without their support and co-operation. The third assembly was also not without political significance, but the political role of the fourth, namely the *vidatha*, cannot be precisely determined. In any case it is clear that these tribal bodies practised some kind of direct democracy in which members made speeches and reached unanimous decisions. The one anxiety that dominated their deliberations was the need for organising successful wars. Every member was obviously a fighter who provided his own equipment and lived on a share of the spoils of war. Fighting wars was evidently the most important function of tribal assemblies, and Ṛg Vedic terms for several other institutions such as *grāma*, *grāmaṇi*, *senā*, *senānī*, etc., also underscore this aspect.

The political organisation deducible from a study of the *Ṛg Veda* does not measure up to the definition of the state. At best it was a tribal chieftainship, without the halo of monarchy, lacking in firm territorial basis, and striving to evolve some system of taxation, standing army and permanent officials, which all constitute the essential ingredients of the state in both the ancient Indian and modern sense. The chieftain owed his power to the support of the clan assemblies whose military functions forcibly strike our attention. In spite of primitive equipment and lack of standing army the Ṛg Vedic society was predominantly military in character.

II

The Later Vedic Phase : Transition to Class and Territorial Government

In some ways the material basis of the later Vedic society was strikingly different from that of Ṛg Vedic society. The Āryans now shifted their scene of activity to western U.P., where they displaced, and imposed themselves on a copper-using people whose tools and weapons have been found in 18 hoards spread over this area and are ascribed to the period 1700-1000 B.C.

This expansion was facilitated by the use of iron tools and weapons, which have been discovered in good numbers at Atiranjikhera in Eta district of western U.P. and belong to the period around 1000 B.C. and certainly are not later than 800 B.C. The later Vedic texts composed in the land of Kuru—Pañcāla or western U. P. use the term *śyāma ayas* for iron. Iron technology put an end to the semi-nomadic and pastoral life of the Vedic people and enabled them to spread as far as Videha in north Bihar by the end of the Vedic period. It placed agriculture on a stable basis in western U.P. and assured the rulers of a regular surplus, which entrenched them territorially.

In association with iron objects at Atiranjikhera, and independently at many sites in western U.P. and the adjoining areas of the Panjab, Delhi region and Rajasthan, have been found numerous sherds of Painted Grey Ware, indicative of settled communities inhabiting this area in the period 1000-500 B.C.

In the later Vedic period smaller communities coalesced into larger units. The Krivis and Purus of Ṛg Vedic times came together to form the Kuru tribe who allied with the Pañcālas, and the two together occupied the whole of western U.P. The rulers no longer depended on uncertain tributes, but probably claimed a portion of agricultural produce. Secure in their regular income they could support a large number of priests, who developed rituals that constitute our only important source for the portrait of later Vedic polity.

Settled life led to the division of the Vedic people into four varṇas. Brāhmaṇas who originally formed one of the 16 classes of priests came at the top, and, in the Vedic ritual texts they composed, claimed both social and political privileges. Śūdras comprising both Āryan and pre-Āryan elements occupied an ambiguous position, which was echoed in both society and politics. Kṣatriyas functioned as rulers, and vaiśyas as the principal taxpayers. The influence of varṇa distinctions and brāhmaṇas is seen in the political organs for the first time in later Vedic times.

Family became more and more patriarchal, and there appeared gotra restrictions on marriage with relations from father's side. Mother-right tended to be more and more undermined, and princes became polygamous; the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*

speaks of the hundred wives of king Hariścandra. The influence of the new family relations can be traced in the compostion of the public bodies and the organs of the state.

The nature of kingship was transformed in this period Rituals outlined in later Vedic texts resound with conflicts between the tribal and the territorial facets of the kingship. The territory was thought to be fluctuating, and so the king was announced to the deities and the people by name, parentage and clan. Such rites as chariot-race, cattle-raid and game of dice are intended to demonstrate the supremacy of the royal candidate over his kinsmen. And the assembly (*pariṣad*) of the Pañcālas presided over by the king is named after the people and not after the country.

But gradually the territorial element asserted itself. The song of election from the *Atharva Veda* wishes that the *rāṣṭra* or the territory be held by the king and be made firm by the king Varuṇa, the god Bṛhaspati, Indra and Agni.[1] In later texts the very fact of performing an elaborate coronation ritual called *rājasūya* extending over two years shows the necessity of having a fixed place. In the Kuru-Pañcāla country the place where the royal seat was situated came to be known as the capital or *āsandīvat*. In the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony the king had to approach dignitaries who lived in permanent dwellings. Several coronation formulas represent the king to be conscious of the territorial aspect of his position. According to a passage from the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, an early *Yajus* collection, the king is announced "in this tribe (*viś*)," "in this kingdom (*rāṣṭra*).[2]" which shows that the tribe and the geographical region occupied by it were becoming co-eval. The same text adds that the partial performance of a ritual enables the king to attain the people (*viś*) but not the *rāṣṭra*, which can be achieved only by its full performance.[3] Further, a ceremony occurring in four versions of the *Yajus* collection symbolises the sovereignty of the king over the four quarters and the zenith.[4]

The latest Vedic texts leave no doubt about the territorial character of monarchy. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* enumerates ten

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1. VI. 88. 2.
2. I. 8. 12.
3. II. 3. 1.
4. *VS*, X. 10-14; *TS*, I. 8. 13; *KS*, XV. 7; *MS*, II. 6-10.

forms of government prevalent in different parts of the country,[1] which shows that government was eatablished in fixed areas. Some of these forms of government may have obtained among the non-Āryan tribal people not yet brought under Vedic influence. Though most terms used for these forms cannot be precisely defined for the Vedic period, *ekarāja* is taken to mean a ruler whose domains extended all over the earth from sea to sea.[2] We may also note that the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* calls the king *rāṣṭrabhṛt* or sustainer of the kingdom.[3]

Towards the end of the later Vedic period the territorial idea generated a sense of possession over the land. Hitherto the king distributed only the spoils of war, mainly cattle and women slaves, among the priests. Now he claimed to grant a part of the land with the consent of the clan.[4] Though this was rarely done in this period it is symptomatic of the new character of kingship.

The emergent social structure naturally left its stamp on kingship. Since the territory was not always identical with the *viś* to which the king belonged but was inhabited by brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras emerging out of the disintegration of the Vedic tribes and assimilation of non-Vedic peoples, it was found necessary to enlist the support of these social groups by means of a coronation ritual.[5] It is clear that the king now belonged to the kṣatriya class, and what really mattered to him was the support of the priests for domination over the mass of the people. The king is called the protector of the brāhmaṇas and the eater of the people.[6] Some rituals stress the supremacy of priests, and others the supremacy of warriors. But finally by means of a compromise both appear as the upholders of the existing order. The king has to give a pledge of standing by the law to the brāhmaṇa priest, and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that the king and the *śrotriya* together uphold the *dharma*.[7]

Though coronation rituals recall the original election of

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1. VIII. 12 & 13.
2. *AB*, VIII. 15.
3. IX. 4. 1. 1.
4. *ŚB*, VII. 1. 1. 4.
5. *VS*, X. 10-14; *KS*, XV. 7.
6. The terms used are *viśāmattā* and *brāhmaṇānāṃ goptā* or *brahmao goptā*. *AB*, VIII. 17.
7. V. 4. 4. 5.

the king, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* prescribes formulas for securing kingship for one, two and three generations.[1] A formula from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* extends it to ten generations.[2] We also come across the term *rājaputra*, which can be interpreted as the king's son in many cases. Examples of kingship for several generations can be produced. Thus kingship had become hereditary in this period.

The other feature that developed in this age was the association of divine elements with the king. There is hardly any piece of evidence of the type in the *Ṛg Veda*, but the consecration ceremonies of the later Vedic texts invoke different gods to endow the king with their respective qualities, and at one or two places the king is represented even as a god.

A remarkable feature of the later Vedic polity is the development of two important organs of government, taxation system and official machinery. Stable agriculture and beginnings of territorial government apparently made available considerable surplus in kind. The term devourer of the people (*viśāmattā*)[3] used for the king shows that he lived on taxes collected from the people. We hear of an official called *bhāgadugha*, who collected the royal share of the produce from the masses of the people. In western U. P. this would be a portion of wheat and several other cereals mentioned in the later Vedic texts. The association of this functionary with Puṣan, the god of the herdsmen who later became agriculturists, establishes that he had to deal with the peasants. But how this tax was assessed and disbursed is not clear.

Regular taxes led to an increase in the number of administrative functionaries during this period. At least 12 of the ratnins seem to have been officials, who were evidently supported out of the taxes collected by the state. They were not concerned with the prevention of crimes but with many positive functions possibly inherited from tribal bodies. Thus they looked after metal-working, chariot-making, meat-supplying, chariot-driving, etc. Such functions can be better appreciated in the context of the material basis of the society whose part they formed. Perhaps these officials were members of the royal

1. VIII. 7.
2. *ŚB*, XII. 9. 3. 1 & 3.
3. *AB*, VIII. 17.

entourage and did not constitute what may be called public servants independent of the royal household. These high functionaries included the *purohita* or the chief priest, who occupied the first place in several lists.

For the greater length of the later Vedic period the *senānī* seems to have been a minor functionary, which would mean that the standing army remained in the background. But since the *senānī* heads the list of the ratnins in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it shows that the army emerged as an important element towards the end of the Vedic period, a fact also supported by the inclusion of the makers and drivers of chariots in the list of the ratnins. However, even at this stage the army was confined to the kinsmen. The Kuru king is surrounded by sixty-four ever ready warriors who are his sons and grandsons.[1] But when the Pañcāla king performs a rite, there arise six thousand and thirty-three warriors clad in mail.[2] This conventional figure might include soldiers who did not belong to the royal kin. In this sense the later Vedic period marks the beginning of some kind of standing army.

Of the development of the internal coercive machinery such as the police system the later Vedic texts give no idea. Probably the police officers of the Ṛg Vedic period continued to function. The king's claim to banish the brāhmaṇa, to overpower the vaiśya and to beat the śūdra could not materialise without a coercive apparatus. It is thought that references to the *sthapati* and *śatapati* indicate the beginnings of a regular system of provincial administration[3], but these officials find no place in the list of ratnins nor does the *adhikṛta* who is regarded as a village officer appointed by the king.[4]

The rise of territorial states made it difficult for the popular assemblies to function in the old way. People from different parts of the kingdom would find it very much inconvenient to come together. Only those who could afford and lived at the capital could gather easily. The rulers were also faced with the difficulty of giving place to non-Vedic peoples. All this gave an aristocratic tinge to the *sabhā* and *samiti*, which

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1. *AB*, III. 48 (sons and grandsons of Vṛddhadyumna).
2. *ŚB*, XIII. 5. 4. 16.
3. H. C. Raychaudhury, *An Advanced Hitory of India*, i (1958), 44.
4. *Praśna Upaniṣad* quoted, ibid., 45.

now became purely patriarchal because of the exclusion of women from their meetings. The popular assemblies lost some of their activities to new officials and became attenuated in both functions and composition.

In retrospect the later Vedic polity, although far more developed in royal power and administrative structure than the Ṛg Vedic polity, still fell short of the *saptāṅga* theory of the state. Really it represents a phase of transition from tribal organisation to varṇa and territorial organisation, which was nearing completion towards the end of the Vedic period.

III

The Pre-Maurya Phase : Territorial Monarchies and Tribal Oligarchies

The available sources for the period relate either to north-east or to north-west India. Their silence about the land of the Kuru-Pañcālas or western U. P., which played a prominent part in the politics of later Vedic times, suggests that it lapsed into obscurity in the age of the Buddha. The widespread use of iron in eastern U. P. and western Bihar, as evidenced from excavations at Rajghat (Banaras) and Chirand (Chapra), led to the formation of large territorial states which were better equipped militarily and in which the warrior class played the main role. New agricultural tools and implements enabled the peasants to produce a good amount of surplus, which not only met the needs of the ruling class but also supported numerous towns. Excavations show Rajgir, Vaiśālī, Rajghat, Chirand, and Kauśāmbī to be urban settlements of the sixth century B.C., although Śrāvastī belongs to a later period. Thus around 500 B.C. we notice a large scale beginning of town life in north-eastern India, giving rise to new problems of administration. Further, these material sinews helped the expansion of Ujjain, Kosala and Magadha, which incorporated non-Vedic areas and peoples into their kingdoms with the result that they became less homogenous.

The period introduced the earliest use of coins, made of copper or silver. From around 500 B.C. the punch-marked coins came definitely into use, which naturally facilitated internal

transactions and trade. An important commodity for the market was the North Black Polished Ware, evidently fashionable with the upper classes of society. On the one hand trade and industry constituted profitable source of income to the state, and on the other it gave rise to a class of merchants, called seṭṭhis, who could not be ignored in society and politics.

The rise of large states with towns as their base of operations strengthened the territorial idea. A passage from Pāṇini shows that people owed allegiance to the *janapada* or the territory to which they belonged. Later the term *jānapada* becomes an important qualification for the recruitment of high officials in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya.

The new material and social situation led to the rapid development of such state organs as army and taxation system. But it also gave rise to some abortive reaction in favour of the old tribal order, leading to the republican experiment.

Most kingdoms of the period, of which Kosala and Magadha were the most powerful, were ruled by hereditary monarchs belonging to the kṣatriya varṇa. The term "king-maker" is used in Pāṇini, and some Jātaka stories refer to the expulsion of the king and his chief priest by the people, but occasions of election or dismissal were rare. The king enjoyed the highest social status and special protection of his person and property. He yielded ground to only such religious leaders as the Buddha.

We hear of officials, both high and low. High functionaries were called *mahāmātras* in the early Pāli texts. Employed in different capacities as multipurpose officers, *mantrin*, *senānāyaka*, judge, chief accountant (*gaṇaka*), and head of the royal harem, they formed a cadre of officers. Although the designation is not known to the law-books, *āyuktas*, etc., may have discharged corresponding functions in the Dharma-sūtra set-up.

The office of the advisers or the ministers of the king first appears in this period, and Vassakāra of Magadha and Dīrgha Cārāyaṇa of Kosala were effective and influential ministers. There is nothing to show that high officers or ministers belonged to the clan of the king : from the beginning the priestly community formed the recruiting ground for these offices.

In both Kosala and Magadha revenues of villages were

granted not only to influential brāhmaṇas but also to seṭṭhis. This did not require the consent of the clan, as we find in later Vedic texts. But administrative rights, which become subjects of grants in inscriptions of north India from the 3rd or 4th century A.D., were not conferred on the beneficiaries at this stage.

In the countryside things were managed by the village headman. Originally functioning as leaders of tribal regiments, the *grāmaṇī* was called *vaiśya-grāmaṇī* in late Vedic texts. Once tribal contingents settled down to agriculture the *grāmaṇī* was naturally transformed into a village headman. Really the period marked the beginnings of the village organisation presided over by the village headman, called variously as *gāmabhojaka*, *grāmaṇi* or *grāmika*. 80,000 *grāmikas* are said to have been summoned by Bimbisāra. Although conventional this number suggests the widespread prevalence of the institution and the importance of the village headman, who was directly linked with the king. Apparently village headmen were responsible for the assessment and collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order in their locality, and sometimes oppressive headmen were taken to task by the villagers.

The real increase in state-power in the period is not so much indicated by the elaboration of the administrative apparatus for civil functions as by the formation of a standing army on a solid basis. The growing prominence given to army is suggested by the exalted place of the *senānāyaka* in the list of high functionaries. At the time of Alexander's invasion the king of the Gangaridae and Prasii, obviously the Nanda ruler of Magadha, kept 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 four-horsed chariots and 3,000-6,000 elephants. Chariots were gradually losing their importance not only in north-eastern but also in north-western India where they were introduced by the Āryans.

The most striking difference in the composition of the army between Magadha and north-western India lay in the use of elephants, of which fewer are mentioned in the later case. As regards cavalry the king of Assakenos (part of Swat and Buner) possessed 20,000 cavalry, as many as the Magadhan

king did. It is therefore evident that the possession of elephants gave an edge to the Magadhan monarchy.

How this Magadhan army was organised and supported we have no means to tell. Apparently this large standing army was financed by the enormous wealth of the Nandas for which they are traditionally famous. But we have no idea of the taxation measures which contributed to it. Doubtless the fiscal system was now established on a firm basis. Warriors and priests—kṣatriyas and brāhmaṇas—were exempted from payment of taxes, and the main brunt was borne by the peasants, mainly vaiśyas. Gautama makes us assume that in the beginning the royal share was 1/12th of the produce, but gradually it settled down to 1/6th. Taxes were collected directly by royal agents with the help of the village headman, and discoveries of numerous hoards of punch-marked coins would suggest payment in both cash and kind. In north-eastern India payment was made in paddy, as would appear from Buddhist texts. Peasants were further subjected to corvée for royal work.

In addition to peasants who were also taxed in later Vedic times, we find new classes of taxpayers in artisans and traders. According to the law-books the first were made to work once a month for the king, and the second had to pay taxes on the sale of their commodities, which were collected by the toll officer known as *śaulkika* in the Dharmasūtras and *śulkādhyakṣa* in the Pāli texts. The new arrangement was the natural sequel to the rise of urban economy.

The Indian legal and judicial system originated in this period. The old tribal law was found inadequate to deal with the problems arising out of the division of the community into sharply-defined social ranks. So the Dharmasūtras laid down the duties of the each one of the four varṇas and based a great deal of civil and criminal law on varṇa division. Civil law was administered by *vyāvahārika mahāmātras* and criminal by royal agents, who inflicted rough and ready punishments such as scourging, branding, beheading, tearing out the tongue, breaking ribs, etc. The police and magistracy set up for dealing with offences against person and property seem to have been rudimentary, and village headmen performed both fiscal and police functions.

But the development did not quite supplant the old tribal

and family law although it superseded the old in many respects. Further, non-Vedic tribal groups and regions incorporated into the brāhmaṇical social order and the monarchical set-up were on the one hand given ficticious social origins and on the other conceded the right to be governed by their own customs, some of which are quoted in the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*. This recognition served as a precedent for new urban occupations organised into guilds, which, though of not the same nature as tribal groups, were permitted to observe their own laws.

Whether guilds had any important hand in urban administration in this period cannot be said. The evidence of the Jātakas might refer to a later period, and the earlier Pāli texts such as the Nikāyas and *Vinaya Piṭaka* contain very little on this point. In spite of the rise of towns from c. 500 B. C. no reliable picture of their administration can be reconstructed until we come to the Maurya period.

The monarchies of the period no longer enjoyed assistance of the *sabhā* and *samiti*. The disappearance of popular assemblies in post-Vedic times needs a word of explanation. Essentially tribal bodies in their origin, they decayed and disappeared as tribes disintegrated into varṇas and lost their identity. The process started from the end of the Vedic period when these assemblies were already in a state of decline. Now their place was taken by caste associations, whose laws and customs came to be taken into account by the writers of law-books but whose activity was confined to social matters. No effort was made to place the tribal assemblies on a territorial basis, as was done by Cleisthenes in Athens in the 5th century B.C. Popular assemblies could succeed only in small kingdoms such as those of the Vedic period. With the emergence of the large states of Kosala and Magadha and the difficulty of communications regular meetings were made impossible. Being tribal the old assemblies could not accommodate many non-Vedic peoples who lived in the new kingdoms. The changed circumstances therefore did not favour the continuance of the old political order. So although we hear of the *samiti* of the Pañcālas in later Vedic times, we do not hear of any popular assembly of their successors. Instead the Dharmasūtras provide for a new small body called *pariṣad* consisting exclusively of the brāhmaṇas. Assemblies there were, but in the smaller republican states of the Śākyas, Licchavis, etc.

The republican experiment is a distinctive feature of the pre-Maurya polity. The republics are found either in the Indus basin or in the foothills of the Himalayas in U. P. and Bihar. The first may have been remnants of Vedic tribes, although in some cases monarchies seem to have been followed by republics. The second may have been breakaway states from parent monarchies in U. P. and Bihar. Their defection may have been inspired by the old idea of tribal equality, which did not give much importance to the rājā.

In all cases real power lay in the hands of tribal oligarchies, which had assumed caste characteristics. In the republics of the Śākyas and Licchavis the ruling class belonged to the same clan and same varṇa. It is doubtful whether the brāhmaṇas sat on the republican assemblies which met in the motehalls. But in post-Maurya times in the republican states of the Mālavas and Kṣudrakas, they also were given citizenship from which slaves and hired labourers were excluded. Alexander's companions noticed a state on the Beas, whose membership was restricted to those who could supply at least one elephant to the state. This may be taken as the most typical example of an oligarchy in the Indus basin.

The administrative machinery of the Śākyas and Licchavis was simple and rudimentary, consisting as it did of a *rājā*, *uparājā*, *senāpati* and *bhāṇḍāgārika*. A fifth century A.D. allusion to a hierarchy of seven courts for trying the same case is too late and too idealised to carry credence.

Several differences marked out the republics from the monarchies. In Magadha and Kosala the king claimed to be the sole recepient of revenue from the peasants, but in the republics this claim was advanced by every tribal oligarch, by each one of the 7707 Licchavi kings who maintained their store-houses. According to a Jātaka this may also have been the case with 60,000 khattiyas in the capital of the Ceta state, all of whom were styled princes (*rājāno*).[1] Similarly a monarchy maintained its regular standing army to the exclusion of armed rivals or competitors within its borders, but in a tribal oligarchy each *rajā* felt happy with his own little army under his *senāpati*

1. *Jāt.*, vi, 513-17; cf. V. S. Agrawala, "The Janapada and the Greek City-State", *IHQ*, xxx, 46.

or with his elephants and competed with the other. Brāhmaṇas had no place in the early republics nor did they recognise these states in their law-books. Finally, what evidently distinguished the republics was the functioning of assemblies, which languished and disappeared in the new monarchies.

The republican tradition became feeble from the Maurya period onwards. Even in pre-Maurya times the monarchic factor was far stronger. The significance of the period lay in evolving the military, fiscal and judicial organs to meet the new social, economic and political situation in the large territorial kingdoms in U. P. and Bihar.

Chapter XVIII

STAGES IN ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY : MAURYA AND LATER

I

The Maurya Phase : Centralised Bureaucratic Interlude

The archaeology of the Maurya period shows the flowering of towns on a large scale in north India. To this period belong most urban settlements with the usual complex of North Black Polished Ware and punch-marked coins, in whose history the Maurya age marks a period of culmination. The punch-marked coins account for the largest number of hoards associated with any coin series in ancient India, and although these range from *c*.500 B.C. to *c*.100 B.C. most coins can be attributed to Maurya times. This naturally gave a great impetus to trade and industry, whose problems occupied the attention of the Maurya state and also enabled the government to pay its employees in cash. The Maurya settlements show considerable use of burnt bricks, which, although as old as Harappa in north-western India, are not noticeable in north-eastern India before the Maurya age.[1] Obviously this new housing material facilitated widespread urban settlements and lent them stability. Discoveries of iron ploughshares, sickles and other implements demonstrate the advanced technological knowledge, which was employed in erecting free-standing monolithic polished pillars. Kauṭilya speaks of reclamation of virgin land, opening of new trade routes and control of trade and industry, and Megasthenes testifies to the interest of the Maurya state in agriculture, irrigation, and in the regulation of economic activities in the capital. Aśokan inscriptions suggest the large-scale employment of masons, artisans and labourers all over India for hewing out pillars, polishing them and carrying them to the right place. Thus whatever might be the reasons the vast economic activities of the government are evident. These naturally left their impact on administration, leading to the creation of an elaborate establishment.

The capital fact of the Maurya political history was the

1. These have been, however, found in Kauśāmbī.

establishment of the Magadhan empire covering the whole of India except the far south. Won by force it could be maintained by force, which was necessary for external defence and internal peace. Internal peace may have been threatened from above by the supporters of old dynasty and from below by the new elements in urban population. Tribal peoples living within and on the frontiers of the empire were a source of constant headache. All this required a huge standing army and an efficient system of criminal administration, for supporting which new sources of revenue had to be tapped.

What forcibly strikes us about the nature of the Maurya state power is the exaltation of royal power. According to Kauṭilya royal order supersedes all other sources of authority including *dharma*. Although this order has to be in accordance with the *dharma*, for the king is the promulgator of *dharma*, it is evident that royal interpretation and even enforcement of *dharma* on a clean slate will modify it. The king will have the latitude to interpret it in the light of the changing situation. Even if this teaching of Kauṭilya be taken as didactic, Aśoka's edicts give clear proof of the all-pervading character of royal orders touching even the social and religious life of the people.

The state tried to control all spheres of life because of the long arms given to it by its vast bureaucracy. If we rely on the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya the establishment of a large and complex bureaucracy would appear to be a remarkable feature of the Maurya government. At one place Kauṭilya mentions 18 *tīrthas* who are probably called *mahāmātras*[1] or high functionaries. Although the term *mahāmātra* is used only on a few occasions in the *Arthaśāstra*-its real counterpart being *amātya*—it is a familiar term in Aśokan inscriptions. A few classes of *mahāmātras* are known to the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, but their number is multiplied by Aśoka in whose empire they served in every great city and district. They were employed in both urban and rural administration and in the border administration. But above all they functioned as *dharmamahāmātras*, enforcing the social and political order ushered in by Aśoka.

In addition to the 18 *tīrthas* Kauṭilya provides for 27 superintendents (*adhyakṣas*) concerned mostly with economic

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1. *AŚ*, I. 13

functions and some military duties though social functions are not ignored. There is nothing common between the officers in this list and those occurring in the list of the *tīrthas*, which suggests that two different traditions have been put together. The other possibility is that *tīrthas* are higher functionaries and do not include *adhyakṣas*, for the pay roll mentions most *tīrthas* but only a few *adhyakṣas*. Further, we hear of several other officers such as *gopa sthānika*. *dharmastha*, *nāgaraka*, etc., who do not find place in any of the three lists mentioned above, and yet they are assigned important functions. How far the *Artha-śāstra* lists reflect the real state of officers is difficult to say. But surely the various lists indicate a tendency to increase the number of officials, which is also broadly supported by the mention of several magistrates by Megasthenes and of a dozen categories of officials in Aśokan inscriptions.

Although the other two sources have nothing to say on rules of recruitment, Kauṭilya lays down certain qualifications for the cadre of high officers known as *amātyas*, the emphasis being on noble birth. From this cadre are to be selected such high officers as *samāhartā*, *sannidhātā* and *dharmastha*, provided they pass certain tests. Thus although no competitive examinations are recommended rules of recruitment do suggest some kind of bureaucratic organisation.

That this bureaucracy was highly hierarchical is suggested by the pay-scale for different categories of employees. The highest functionaries such as the *mantrin*, *purohita*, *senāpati* and *yuvarāja* are paid generously as much as 48,000 paṇas, paṇa being a silver coin with a silver content equal to 3/4 s of a tolā.[1] In contrast the lowest officials are recommended 60 *paṇas* in the consolidated pay list given in the section on *bhṛtya-bharaṇīyam* (V. 3). but at other places they are given as small a pittance as only 10 or 20 paṇas. The ratio therefore would work out at 1 : 4800, which indicates an enormous gap between the highest and the lowest class of government servants. What is more important for us is that it shows a pyramidical bureaucratic structure. All told the Mauryas created a singular bureaucratic machinery, which does presuppose a large empire and a considerable amount of surplus in cash and kind for its support.

1. R. P. Kangle, *The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*, iii, 208.

It may not be regar ded rational in the modern sense of the term, but it is not patrimonial either for it was not a part of the royal household.

Bureaucracy formed the arms of the royal power, but the crucial factor that contributed to it was the development of the coer cive power of the state on an unprecedented scale. Accord-ing to Justin Candragupta Maurya possessed 600,000 troops, which was thrice the number of infantry possessed by the Nandas. The usual limbs, the infantry, the cavalry, the chariots and the elephants were strengthened by the addition of two wings, the navy, and transport and commissariat,—a develop-ment suggested by both Megasthenes and Kauṭilya. The power of sword was strengthened by the royal monopoly of arms and control over artisans who produce d weapons.

The army may h ave been occasionally used to put down internal revolts, but if we rely on the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya the Mauryas developed the first efficient system of police and criminal administration buttressed by an elaborate system of espionage. The *kaṇṭakaśodhana* was organised to deal with a large number of economic crimes typical of an urban environment. Many of its provisions are directed against the activities of artisans and traders who used false weights and measures and demanded high prices. The organisation of criminal administration, so charac-teristic of Kauṭilya, does not show any trace of external influence, and was evidently an indigenous phenomenon. Similar is the case with various categories of spies, who were employed to keep an eye and report on the criminal and anti-government activities of the people.

However, the officers who were charged with the adminis-tration of criminal law and investigation of crimes were not exclusively police officers in the modern sense of the term. The nearest approach to a modern police-cum-magisterial officer was the *pradeṣṭā*, but he had also some revenue functions. On the other hand the *samāhartā*, the *sthānika* and the *gopa*, who had mainly fiscal functions, were also assigned some police and magisterial duties.

The growing economic activities of the state and needs of urban settlements led to the creation of a machinery for town administration, of which we do not hear much in pre-Maurya times. The municipal administration of Pāṭaliputra described

by Megasthenes does show the concern of the government for certain basic urban problems such as sanitation, care of foreigners, registration of births and deaths, etc., which also receive the attention of Kauṭilya. Kauṭilya does not give any indication of the association of the local elements with town administration; he imposes it from above. He lays down in detail the duties of the *nāgaraka*, probably identical with the *nagaravyāvahārika* of Aśokan inscriptions. The *nāgaraka* is charged with the maintenance of law and order and with the supervision of sanitation arrangements. In view of the widespread use of wooden structures, remnants of which have been discovered at the Maurya site at Kumrahar (Patna), an important duty of the *nāgaraka* was to take measures against outbreaks of fire.

The *nāgaraka* had under him subordinate officials called *sthānika* and *gopa*, who were placed in charge of the wards into which the town was divided and maintained records of the number of houses, etc. These two officials are first mentioned in connection with the rural revenue administration. Apparently the rural system of administration was projected on to the urban areas to meet their needs, the *nāgaraka* being the only officer typical of the urban areas.

The Maurya rural administration, as can be inferred from the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, was mainly designed to meet the needs of revenue administration. The *samāhartā*, head of the *janapada*, was primarily responsible for assessment of revenue, in which he was assisted by the *sthānika* and *gopa* who carried out an elaborate census for the purpose. These officials not only assessed and collected revenues but also enforced law and order. Along with the *pradeṣṭā* they combined in their hands revenue, police and magisterial functions.

Aśoka introduced an element of moderation in his border administration and in his dealings with the tribal peoples. The *antamahāmātras* were asked to persuade the border peoples to conform to *dharma*, rules of peaceful social conduct such as obeying the king and elders and desisting from violence. But if they did not observe those rules they were threatened with punishments. It is claimed by Aśoka in his Kandhar inscriptions that this policy really succeeded with the people.

The Maurya period constitutes a landmark in the evolution of the system of taxation in ancient India. Kauṭilya

introduces us to new taxes to be collected from the rural and urban areas, from peasants and from artisans and traders. All this required a strong and efficient machinery for assessment, collection and storage. It is characteristic of the advanced revenue system of the Mauryas that more importance is attached to assessment than to storage and depositing. The harm done to the state by the *samāhartā*, the highest officer in charge of assessment, is thought to be more serious than that caused by the *sannidhātā*, the chief custodian of the state treasury and storehouse. In fact the assessment machinery first appears in the Maurya period.

The list of taxes and imposts in the *Arthaśāstra* is impressive, and if these were really collected they must have proved oppressive. But even all these were not considered adequate to meet the needs of the exchequer, which had to finance the vast military and bureaucratic establishments. These therefore had to be supplemented by the reclamation of the virgin land, exploitation of mines and the running of goldsmith's shops, liquor shops and weaving concerns, all done under the aegis of the state.

What has been stated above will show that the Maurya government was highly centralised. We have no direct evidence of the functioning of the village councils in this period, although guilds enjoyed some autonomy and some local elements may have participated in the administration of Pāṭaliputra. Probably Aśoka shared powers with the *pariṣad* and so did some of his provincial governors, but all this did not result in much decentralisation. However, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya shows a few traits of decentralisation. In new settlements tax-free lands are to be granted to priests, preceptors, the *purohita* and other learned brāhmaṇas as well as to superintendents and some village servants of lower classes.[1] Nevertheless such gift lands are inalienable,[2] and the grant of a whole village to an efficer is not recommended.[3] Again, the detailed provisions regarding *parihāras* or remissions from various kinds of revenues in gift villages to be allowed to peasants, etc., have in view the augmentation of the state revenue and not the reward

1. *AŚ*, II. 1.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. V. 3.

of religious beneficiaries as characterised the *parihāras* of the early centuries of the Christian era under the Sātavāhanas and Pallavas. However, the one single factor that worked for decentralisation in the later part of the Maurya empire was large executive and judicial powers granted by Aśoka to the *rājukas*, who were placed over hundreds and thousands of people.

Elements of decentralisation have a subordinate place in the Maurya polity. Our sources convey the unmistakable impression of centralised bureaucratic control, which is consistent with the vast empire and expanding economic activities of the Mauryas. This together with a well organised police and military system and revenue machinery helped to strengthen royal power, which manifested itself in *śāsana*. Kauṭilya instructs the king to keep the power of the treasury and army in his own hands.[1] Since these two vital organs seem to be very well-established in the Maurya age, they would give enormous powers to the king who wielded them.

It is argued that the Mauryan polity was based on the Achaemenid and Ptolemid model. In view of borrowings in Aśokan architecture and inscriptions and in view of the Persian rule on the north-western borders of India, the theory of the Achaemenid influences on the Indian system of government does not sound fantastic. But it would be too much to think that the absolutist, internal government outlined in the *Arthaśāstra* was a ready-made import from outside. Really it was the culmination of forces and processes visible in pre-Maurya times. Even if the inspiration came from outside the change was induced from inside. Āpastamba, a pre-Maurya lawgiver, advises the king to found the capital city, and Vasiṣṭha asks him to appoint officers to look after the harem. This reminds us of the colonisation policy and the appointment of *strīadhyakṣa* recommended by Kauṭilya.

The Jātakas hold the king responsible even for such things as want of rain, non-availability of bridegroom for the daughter and calamity befalling the oxen of a farmer. These are obviously things over which the king had no control, but as head of the community he was associated with all those functions which once pertained to the office of a tribal chief. From this

1. *AŚ*, VIII. 2.

the state control of various activities recommended by Kauṭilya was not a far cry.

The main reason for the exaltation of royal power lay in the growing importance of the warrior class from pre-Maurya times. The kṣatriyas made their influence felt not only in religion and society but also in politics. The consistent policy of aggrandisement followed by Magadha steeled the warriors and brought them to the fore. The new situation is recognised by Kauṭilya and Aśoka, both of whom try to undermine brāhmaṇical influence in politics, religion and society. Since priestly power was the only important check on royal authority, what it lost was a gain to royal power.

II

The Post-Maurya Phase : Divinity and Decentralisation

The initiative taken by the Maurya state in opening new regions to trade and agriculture bore fruition in post-Maurya times. The real significance of the Maurya rule lay in spreading the use of coins, North Black Polished ware, and advanced knowledge of iron technology in the Deccan and other peripheral areas outside the pale of the brāhmaṇical culture. This paved the way for the rise of a large number of towns in the Deccan, as is borne out by excavations and inscriptions. People used coins of lead, potin and silver, which have been discovered in large quantities. This facilitated internal transactions and promoted foreign trade with Central Asia, South-East Asia and above all with Rome, whose gold coins have been discovered in large hoards south of the Vindhyas. In the north we have the gold coins of the Kuṣāṇas, and, what is more important for ordinary transactions, we have a large number of their copper coins. Naturally never before and after inscriptions speak of so many guilds of artisans and merchants in ancient India, especially in the Deccan. All this left its mark on the Śaka-Sātavāhana polity.

The social and religious setting of the post-Maurya period cannot be ignored. The indigenous ruling houses of the Śuṅgas, Kāṇvas and Sātavāhanas appear to have made it an age of triumphant brāhmaṇism, although with the artisans and

merchants in the Deccan and with some foreign rulers such as the Indo-Greeks and Kuṣāṇas Buddhism seems to have been popular. Land grants had to be made to both brāhmaṇas and Buddhists to keep them going. By ascribing divine attributes to the king the brāhmaṇas created a fertile soil for the germination of foreign ideas on divinity brought by the Scythians. They also converted some indigenous kings into zealous champions of the social and political order advocated by the early law-books. Moreover, they gave the final form to the law-book of Manu which not only served as their Magna Charta but also legalised the wide proliferation of the caste system. According to Manu the mixed castes numbered around sixty, nearly five times more than their number in Maurya times. Since the caste absorbed and governed a large area of the activities of its members very little was left for the government to take care of unless it concerned itself with inter-caste conflicts or certain criminal offences of which the caste could not take cognizance.

The fall of the Maurya empire led to the revival of a few republics in Rajasthan and the Panjab, but their coins show a progressive tendency towards monarchisation. Essentially it was an age of small monarchies or chieftainships, the Sātavāhanas and the Kuṣāṇās being the only two large kingdoms, which entered into feudatory relations with smaller kings. Such an organisation was needed by the Sātavāhanas, who were improvised brāhmaṇas ruling over semi-brāhmaṇised or non-brāhmaṇised chiefs in the Deccan and South. For the Scythians, who came from Central Asia, it was all the more natural. The Sātavāhanas therefore had several feudatories such as the Mahāraṭhīs Ikṣvākus, etc., who set up their independent states on the ruins of the rule of their overlord. The titles adopted by the Kuṣāṇa kings indicate the existence of many lesser kings and *ṣāhis*, who paid homage and tribute to the paramount power and rendered it military service. Clearly the Sātavāhanas and Kuṣāṇas did not exercise effective direct control over such a large part of the country as the Mauryas did.

A second factor leading to decentralisation was the grant of fiscal rights to Buddhist and brāhmaṇa beneficiaries. This was typical of the Sātavāhana rule in the Deccan, for although the term *akṣayanīvi*, inexhaustible deposit, is used in Kuṣāṇa inscriptions, land grants according to this tenure are found only

later in Gupta times. Lands or villages granted for religious purposes enjoyed *parihāras*, or concessions which included exemption from the entry of royal agents, policemen and soldiers. To this extent the beneficiaries were free to manage village affairs and to maintain law and order there. While they formed semi-independent administrative pockets in the countryside they probably also impressed upon the rural people the necessity of observing social laws and obeying the king, who was credited with some divine attributes.

The post-Maurya polity is distinguished by the functioning of almost autonomous governments in at least a dozen cities of northern India in the second and first centuries B.C. Guilds of traders belonging to these cities issued coins (although of copper), which is ordinarily done by sovereign powers. The term *nigama* is clearly mentioned in five pre-Indo-Greek coins, 4 of them bearing the names of the different quarters of Taxila,[1] and the term *pañcanigama* is found in a sixth coin[2] from Taxila. It is evident that on the eve of the Greek occupation of Taxila its government was carried on either by a single corporation of artisans and merchants or by a joint body comprising five corporations. The practice also prevailed in Kauśāmbī which is known as *nigama* on one of its coins.[3] Coins of guild of the *gandhikas*, literally perfumers but really general merchants, have been also found in the region around Kauśāmbī.[4] In such cities as Tripurī, Māhiṣmatī, Vidiśā, Eran, Bhagilā, Mādhyamikā, Vemaka, Vārāṇasī, etc., whose names occur on their copper coins, the corporate existence of each one is evident, but how they were governed is not clear. Although the term *nigama* does not occur in their coins, the cities probably emerged as autonomous entities on the disintegration of the Maurya empire and before the rise of the Śaka and Kuṣāṇa power. At no stage in early Indian history do we find cities or its guilds issuing coins as we find them in the post-Maurya period in northern and central India.

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1. Johan Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, pp. cxxvii, 214-16.
2. Ibid., p. 216.
3. K. D. Bajpai, "Authority of minting coin in ancient India," *JNSI*, xxv 1963, 20.
4. Ibid., 19.

When the Sātavāhanas and the Kuṣāṇas established their kingdoms in the first two centuries of the Christian era, these towns lost their autonomous character, but their civic life did not lose its vigour. The rulers had to reckon with merchant corporations called *nigama sabhā* in the towns of the Deccan and with the guilds of artisans in the Kuṣāṇa territory. Inscriptions show that they administered donations in towns in north India and western India; especially in the latter region this was done on a large scale. Clear proof of the participation of merchants in town administration is lacking. But if they were thought competent enough to take care of rich donations made by princes, why could not they be trusted with the responsibility of urban administration? The fact that many merchants proudly mention the towns to which they belonged as integral parts of their names betrays a high degree of civic sense, possibly born of their actual involvement in the government of their towns. Thus while the Maurya town administration was a mechanism imposed from above, the post-Mauryan counterpart seems to have been an experiment emanating from below. In any case the internal affairs of the guilds were regulated by its customs and laws, although they were not granted any special charters by the state, as came to be the case in the 6th century A.D.

At several points the old centralised system of administration was continued and even strengthened by the accession of new elements. The Aśokan system of dividing the kingdom into *āhāras* and placing them under the charge of royal officers continued in the Sātavāhana kingdom, the only difference being that now the officer was called *amātya* in place of *mahāmātra*. A passage from the *Sabhā Parva* suggests that their posts were hereditary.[1] The *amātyas* are not heard of in the Kuṣāṇa system although they were commonly employed by the Śaka rulers of western India and functioned as both advisers (*mati-saciva*) and administrators (*karma-saciva*). Their counterpart in the Kuṣāṇa dominions was provided by the *daṇḍanāyakas* whose military duties outweighed their civil functions.

We do not find traces of the Maurya system in the territories ruled by the Indo-Greeks and their foreign successors. The Śakas and Parthians introduced the practice of joint rule,

1. 5. 33.

the heir-apparent sharing powers equally with the reigning king, and the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas brought in the satrapical system borrowed from the Achaemenids via the Parthians. The Kuṣāṇas also introduced the curious practice of double governorship in the provinces which was a reflection of the old practice at the centre. In the Kuṣāṇa dominions administration at the village level continued to be carried on by the *grāmika* or the *grāmasvāmī* appointed by the king. Apparently the village headman continued to discharge police and revenue functions.

The system of taxation seems to have been rendered simpler in post-Maurya times. Many taxes and revenue officers mentioned by Kauṭilya are not supported by inscriptions of post-Maurya times. *Bali*, *bhāga*, *bhoga* and *kara* occur in inscriptions of western India and the Deccan, but what part of the produce they formed is not known. In the Śaka dominions in western India the emergency tax called *praṇaya* and forced labour called *viṣṭi* seem to have been in operation. *Viṣṭi* was imposed on the subjects irrespective of their being slaves and wage-earners, for whom only it is prescribed by Kautilya. Largescale use of coins would suggest assessment and collection in cash in the territories held by both the Śakas and Sātavāhanas.

One significant development in the fiscal system is indicated by Manu and the *Śanti Parva*. They recommend the arrangement of the fiscal units on the basis of the decimal system, 1,10 and 100 villages. The largest unit consisted of 1,000 villages and was held by the *sahasrapati*, who was probably identical with the *rāṣṭrīya*.[1] The *rāṣṭrīya* is to be paid in cash and kind not directly by the king but out of the revenues of a branch town assigned to him.[2] Thus the officers charged with the collection of taxes in the decimal units are allowed payment in revenues from a piece of land, a village or a town, as the case may be. In this case the Maurya payment in cash is partly substituted by payment in kind derived from assignments to officers, which may be regarded as a feudal practice.

Although we have no information about the military strength of the Sātavāhanas or the Kuṣāṇas, it seems that the latter owed their power to the use of cavalry who used stirrups,

1. *ŚP*, 88. 8-9.
2. Ibid. cf. B. P. Roy, "Political Ideas and Institutions in the Mahābhārata" (Ph. D. thesis, Patna University), p. 487.

represented in the sculptures of the period. An important development of the period seems to have been the militarisation of government in both the Sātavāhana and Kuṣāṇa dominions. An *āhāra* was placed under the *mahāsenāpati* and a village under a *gaulmika*, head of a small military unit. Similarly under the Kuṣāṇas semi-military officers known as *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahā-daṇḍanāyaka* looked after local units of administration. The Kuṣāṇas being foreigners, their system is quite understandable; in the Sātavāhana dominions it may have prevailed in the newly conquered areas.

In one sense the religious aspect of the kingship was weakened in post-Maurya times, for the *purohita*, who appears as a very high functionary in all early texts right from late Vedic to Maurya times, figures neither in Sātavāhana nor in Kuṣāṇa inscriptions; nor does he appear in Gupta inscriptions.[1] It is argued that with the disappearance of Vedic sacrifices the *purohita* lost his position. But even the revival of sacrifices under the Sātavāhanas did not elevate the political status of the priest. The Sātavāhanas may have acted as their own priests. No similar explanation can be offered for the non-existence of the chief priest in the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta polity, which would suggest less of religious influence. However, the absence of the priestly office was more than made up by the ascription of divine attributes to the king.

A typical feature of the period was the emphasis on divine aspects of the kingship. Formerly gods were compared to princes. Now the emphasis shifted the other way about and rulers began to be compared to gods. This appears in an inscription in which the Sātavāhana king Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi is compared to several gods in prowess, etc. But a conspicuous development takes place among the Kuṣāṇa rulers, who are called *devaputra*, son of the god. Aśoka is described as *devānāṃpriya*, dear to gods. But the Kuṣāṇa kings adopted a title known only to the Chinese and the Romans. They also started the practice of setting up *devakulas*, deification of the status of the dead kings in temples. In contrast to the Greek rulers of Egypt who adopted the practice of the emperor worship under

1. But the fact that the *purohita* appears in Gāhaḍavāla inscriptions of the 11th and 12th centuries will have to be explained.

local influence the Kuṣāṇa rulers introduced this in India under foreign influence. For lack of an indigenous base none of these practices survived the Kuṣāṇa rule. On the other hand the Sātavāhana practice of comparing the king with the gods was continued in Gupta inscriptions, which accredit the Gupta king with the attributes of different gods.

On the indigenous side the coins reveal that some tribal republican states came to be headed by their gods in whose name the coins were issued. The Kuṇīndas and Audambaras issued coins on behalf of their gods.[1] A typical example is that of the Yaudheyas who ruled in the name of their god Brahmaṇya.[2] This practice is also supported by a seal from Bhīṭā which refers to the offer of a kingdom to the god Mahāsena.[3] All this would suggest that in some post-Maurya republics and monarchies of north India the rulers functioned as the regents of god, reminding us of a similar practice in the mediaeval Deccan where some rulers reigned as the leaseholders of their gods. But perhaps the wishes of the presiding deities of these states were not interpreted by the priests as happened under priestly and theocratic rule in Egypt. Probably the rulers only made a formal surrender of their kingdoms to their patron gods and received them back in the same manner as a devotee receives back the offerings made to the god and uses them for his own purpose. At best the practice shows the tendency to treat the state as an item of property on the part of the king or of the governing class.

From about the fifth century B.C. religious sanction in the form of penances was invoked for the maintenance of social stability. Remarkably enough their number shoots up in the law-book of Manu, which provides 267 verses on the *prāyaścitta dharma*. The penances mentioned therein have a comprehensive scope and include not only murder and abuse but also purely social offences such as violation of caste rules of which the modern law does not take cognizance. The possible agency for enforcing the penances were the brāhmaṇas who mobilised the conscience of the community for the purpose. The sudden spurt

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1. P, L. Gupta, "Bearing of the numismatics on the history of the tribal republics in ancient India", *IHQ*, xxvii, 204-07.
2. Ibid., 207.
3. Ibid., fn. 51a.

to brāhmaṇical activities in politics and society from post-Maurya times ties up with their role in implementing the penances. Possibly they collected gifts imposed upon the offenders and administered the necessary penances to them. Penances therefore served an important purpose in maintaining law and order in the rural communities.

The deification of the king, the militarisation of civil administration, the attempts at provincial administration, collection of taxes and imposition of forced labour through royal agents, all these factors helped maintain the old centralised system. But there were fewer officials to promote it, certainly not as many as the Mauryas had. Since kingdoms were smaller and taxes few it was not possible to support a large administrative establishment. Most economic activities now devolved on guilds and individuals, which obviated the necessity of having too many officials engaged for this purpose in the Maurya empire. Further, a good part of administration was handled by the guilds of merchants in the urban areas and by religious beneficiaries in the rural areas. The beneficiaries also taught the people the rules of *varṇāśrama dharma* and non-violence, which led to peace and stability in society. On the whole we notice several elements of decentralisation in the Śaka-Sātavāhana polity, which naturally paved the way for the feudal traits of the Gupta polity.

III

The Gupta Phase : Proto-Feudal Polity

In spite of decrease in the volume of foreign trade the Gupta age was a period of economic expansion promoted by grants of land to enterprising brāhmaṇas in inhospitable and virgin tracts in central India, Deccan and south India. The period saw a marked growth of private property in land recognised by the law-books and attested by actual sale and purchase of land with gold coins. The economic prosperity of the ruling class is indicated by so many gold coins as do not belong to any other dynasty of ancient India. The use of gold currency strengthened traders and rich artisans, with whose guilds cash endowments in gold were occasionally deposited. Guilds con-

tinued to play an important part in the economic and administrative set-up of Gupta times.

For a total picture of political organisation in Gupta times we have to always bear in mind the existence of numerous dynasties throughout the length and breadth of the country. Allowing for an element of exaggeration in the account of Hariṣeṇa, some of them were subjugated by Samudra Gupta, and certainly western India was conquered by Candra Gupta II. Conquests of distant regions made it necessary to evolve some kind of feudatory organisation.

In contrast to the Mauryas the Gupta kings adopted pompous titles such as *parameśvara*, *mahārājadhirāja*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, which signify the existence of lesser kings in their empire. Although kingship was hereditary, royal power was limited by the absence of the firm practice of primogeniture. Nārada repeats the dictum of Kauṭilya regarding the supremacy of *rājaśāsana* over all the other sources of law, but the Gupta king had to reckon with his ministers, feudatories and above all the brāhmaṇas, who claim many privileges in the law-book of Nārada and who were certainly the chief custodians and interpreters of the law embodied in the Smṛtis. Although the *purohita* or the chief priest is not mentioned as a high functionary in Gupta records, in return for munificient gifts the grateful brāhmaṇas, who evidently composed Gupta inscriptions, compared the Gupta kings with different gods, thus maintaining the Sātavāhana tradition and projecting it on to north India.

Despite the glowing account of the all-round conquests of Samudra Gupta we do not have much information about the military apparatus of the Guptas. Unfortunately Fa-hsien does not state the numerical strength of the Gupta army as classical writers do in the case of the Nandas and Mauryas. But evidently the troops supplied by the feudatories accounted for a good portions of the Gupta army. Chariots receded into the background, cavalry came to the fore, and horse archery became prominent in military tactics. But the state no longer enjoyed monopoly over the possession of horses and elephants, which now came to be owned by powerful private individuals.

Taxes mentioned in Gupta inscriptions are not as many as enumerated by the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. But in this period land taxes increase in number, and those on trade and

commerce decrease. The two chief land taxes typical of the period are *udyaṅga* and *uparikara*, but what portion of the peasant's produce they covered is not known. Richer peasants seem to have paid in cash, preferably in gold, which was known by the name of *hiraṇya*. In central and western India the rulers imposed forced labour or *viṣṭi* on the peasants. In addition to this in the territories held up by the Vākāṭakas and others in central India, the peasants had to supply animals, food grains, furniture, etc., for the maintenance of royal officers and retainers on duty in the rural areas.

Although land grants mention quite a few officials surely the number of officers associated with the fiscal and economic activities was not as large as in Maurya times. The Gupta bureaucracy was not as elaborate and as organised as its Maurya counterpart. The widely prevalent cadre which supplied superior officers was that of the *kumārāmātya*, corresponding to the *mahāmātya* of Aśokan and *amātya* of Sātavāhana inscriptions. Most high officers were directly appointed by the king in the home provinces and possibly paid in cash. Since the Guptas were vaiśyas recruitment was not confined to the two upper varṇas. But several offices came to be combined in the hands of the same person and posts became hereditary. This naturally weakened royal control over the administrative machinery.

For the first time inscriptions give us an idea of systematic local and provincial administration in the Gupta period. The empire was divided into *bhuktis* placed under the charge of the *uparika* ; we know of at least half a dozen *bhuktis* in Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and Madhya Pradesh. The *bhuktis* were divided into *viṣayas* placed under the charge of the *viṣayapati*. In eastern India the *viṣaya* was divided into *vīthīs*, and the *vīthī* into villages. This pattern, however, obtained mainly in the territories directly governed by Gupta kings. Elsewhere we hear of different fiscal and administrative units such as *deśa*, *maṇḍala*, *bhoga*, etc., especially in central and western India.

The village administration assumed new dimensions is the Gupta period. The state did not exercise any close supervision as the *gopa* did in Maurya times, and households were not registered. Village affairs were now managed by the village headman with the assistance of elders, *mahattara*, who were

sometimes also associated with the government of the *viṣaya*. The Gupta inscriptions refer to the participation of leading local elements in the administration of the village or small towns called *vīthīs*. No land transactions could be effected without their consent, and this may have been also true of other important affairs. Thus while villages in Maurya times were managed from above those in Gupta times seem to have been managed from below.

The urban administration of north India is no longer marked by the existence of independent towns, but organised professional bodies enjoyed considerable autonomy. They had issued coins in post-Maurya times but now issued only seals to enforce their authority. The seals from Vaiśālī clearly show that artisans, merchants and bankers served on the same corporate body, and in this capacity obviously managed the affairs of the town; corporations of artisans and bankers existed separately too. In addition to this we hear of numerous separate guilds of artisans, traders, etc., at Bhīṭā and Vaiśālī. The guild of silkweavers in Mandasor and that of oilpressers in Indor (Bulandshahr) are well celebrated in Gupta inscriptions. The professional guilds were different from family organisations and showed considerable mobility, as can be inferred from the example of the Mandsor silkweavers. Guilds were guided by their customs and usages followed by their officers without any interference from the state. Although guilds are mentioned in the pre-Gupta law-books, the most detailed laws regarding their functioning and regarding business partnerships are laid down by the lawgivers of Gupta times. Undoubtedly corporate bodies had now become so prominent as to attract the special attention of the jurists, who enjoined the king not only to respect the laws and customs of the guilds but also to implement them. The managers of the guilds could naturally invoke the coercive authority of the state if their members did not behave well. A concrete example of how the guilds of merchants enjoyed immunities and exercised control over artisans is found in the charter of Viṣṇuṣena granted in A.D. 592[1]. It would therefore appear that in Gupta times guilds looked after the affairs of their members as well as of the

1. Supra, p. 253.

towns in which they were situated. Consequently the state was partly relieved of the burden of administering the towns, and inscriptions do not speak of any state officers who may have been specifically assigned functions for this purpose.

Corporate bodies played an important part in the administration of justice. The law-codes provide a hierarchy of three such courts from which the final appeal lay to the king. We have no idea of the law they administered. But the general legal system was the handiwork of brāhmaṇical lawgivers who produced a rich collection of legal texts in the Gupta age. In several directions the legal system registered a distinct advance. First, the law of inheritance, because of the introduction of partition of landed property, received an elaborate treatment in the law-book of Yājñavalkya. Secondly, Nārada and Bṛhaspati drew a line between two types of law, 14 titles relating to property and 4 to injury. Thirdly, the law-books of Nārada, Bṛhaspati and Kātyāyana tell us in detail about the constitution of courts, the judicial procedure and the law of evidence. The lawgivers generally prefer judges and assessors of the brāhmaṇa varṇa, failing which those of the two lower varṇas can be entertained, but in no case the śūdras are to be recruited. The judicial officers or courts mentioned in the law-books are not attested by inscriptions. On the other hand the only important judicial officer, *vinayasthiti-sthāpaka*, mentioned in a Vaiśālī seal is not known to the Smṛtis of the period. The judicial procedure of the Gupta law-books prescribe too many ordeals for establishing the guilt of the persons on trial. Their number is nearly doubled, which shows increasing belief in divine dispensation evidently fostered by the priests. The fear of ordeals may have extorted confessions from the criminals and helped the administration of justice.

Although north Bengal, Bihar and U. P. were ruled directly by the officers appointed by the Gupta king, the major part of the empire was held by such feudatories as the Parivrājaka and Uccakalpa princes and many others subjugated by Samudra Gupta. The vassals, who evidently lived in the outer fringe of the empire, carried out their obligations in three ways. They offered homage to the sovereign by personal attendance in his court, paid tributes to him, and presented to him daughters in marriage. The Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta

mentions all these practices, but in addition the vassals apparently supplied troops to their overlord, who extended protection to their protégés in times of war. The leading feudatories of the Guptas included the Maitrakas of Valabhī, the Vardhanas of Thaneser, the Maukharis of Kanauj, the Later Guptas of Magadha, the Candras of Bengal, etc., who rose on the ruins of the Gupta empire.

The second important feudal development in the Gupta empire was the grant of fiscal and administrative immunities to priests and temples. The practice started with the Sātavāhanas in the Deccan and became widespread in central India in the territories held by the feudatories of the Guptas and in those held by the Vākāṭakas, although the Gupta emperors made very few grants. The new fiscal concessions embraced transfer of royal rights over salt and mines, which were royal monopolies and evident signs of sovereignty. The religious beneficiaries were granted villages for ever and were entitled to all the taxes accruing to the benefactor without any responsibility of paying any portion of it to the grantor. What distinguished the land charters of the Gupta period was the administrative privileges conferred on the beneficiaries. They enjoyed freedom from the entry of royal agents, retainers, etc., which is also found in Sātavāhana charters. But now they were empowered to punish the criminals guilty of ten offences. In other words they were vested with magisterial and police powers. Further, the inhabitants of the villages placed under the charge of the beneficieries as a result of gifts made to them were asked by the king to obey their new masters and to carry out their orders.

The avowed purpose for which lands were granted to priests and temples was religious and spiritual. In only one case the brāhmaṇas are granted land on the condition that they commit no wrong against the state and maintain good behaviour. In practice the beneficiaries exclusively bore the burden of administration in the areas granted to them and exercised a salutory and stabilising influence over the rural communities by teaching them the duties of castes, prescribing penances, and presenting to them the divine image of their princely benefactors.

Whether state officials were paid by grants of land in Gupta times is not clear. Abundance of gold coins would suggest that high officers were paid in cash. But the law-books of the

period lay down clear provisions for remuneration of revenue officials by land grants and for reward of officers by the same mode. Inscriptions from central India show that lands granted to temples were placed under the management of scribes and merchants, and sometimes aboriginal chiefs were assigned land for their maintenance. But the practice of service tenures had not become widespread.

Since a considerable area of imperial administration was managed by feudatories and beneficiaries the Gupta rulers did not require as many officials as the Mauryas did; officials were also rendered redundant because of the absence of state economic activities on any big scale. Nor was a large standing army necessary on the same scale as was maintained by the Mauryas. The need for an elaborate administrative establishment was further lessened by the participation of artisans, merchants, elders, etc., in rural and urban administration—a feature not noticeable in Maurya times. Villages assumed more authority leaving less for the centre to do. The Guptas therefore neither needed nor possessed the elaborate bureaucracy of the Maurya type, and in spite of the strong arms of the Gupta kings institutional factors working for decentralisation were far stronger in the Gupta age than in pre-Gupta times. In many ways the Gupta rule marked the beginnings of the feudal polity, which became typical of early mediaeval India.

Chapter XIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The independent chapters assigned to political ideas in this book occupy a comparatively minor place, but that is no measure of their importance. Some of the ideas, such as the *saptāṅga* concept of the state, are marked by considerable coherence and systematization, and can rightly be placed in the category of theories. Indeed, keeping in view the other ancient notions of the state, the seven-element theory of the state must be reckoned as a unique contribution of the ancient Indian thinkers to political philosophy. It not only shows a happy blending of theory and practice but also holds certain elements in common with the modern definitions of the state.

As regards the theories of the origin of the state, references to the contract theory in ancient Indian texts seem to be very attractive from the Western point of view. The various stages in the development of this theory, extending over more than a thousand years, mark progressive enlargement of the obligations of both the contracting parties, especially of the ruled, for payment of various taxes. Thus in ancient India the contract theory was intended to emphasise the power of the king rather than that of the people. From the Indian point of view, considerations of preserving family, property and varṇa system played the most vital part in the origin of the state. The traditional account of the state of nature and the circumstances leading to the rise of coercive authority, the conditions obtaining in a kingless society, the concept of the main duties of the monarch,—all point to the same conclusion.

Theoretical discussions about the state do not appear in the *Ṛg Veda*. In the later Vedic texts some kṣatriya princes speculate on the nature of relation between God and the soul, but they have nothing to contribute to political ideas. The Vedic period, especially the early part of it, was essentially an age of communal institutions which cannot be considered political in the modern sense. These institutions such as the *gaṇa*, the *vidatha*, the *sabhā*, the *samiti* and the *pariṣad* were mainly tribal in

character. Of these the *vidatha* seems to have been of the greatest antiquity among the Indo-Āryans and contains even memories of pre-Ṛg Vedic times. The presence of women on it is opposed to the prevailing view that from the very beginning the Āryan society was patriarchal. However, the female membership of the *pariṣad* may have been a pre-Āryan trait. In the Vedic *gaṇa* this feature is not prominent, although the epic and Purāṇic allusions associate women with this body also. The *gaṇa*, though not as old as the *vidatha*, shares with it the characteristics of communal ownership and distribution of spoils of war and other forms of property. Its significance lies in the fact that it provided a pattern of republican government to some oligarchic states, which supplanted monarchies in the age of the Buddha. It is very difficult to isolate the purely political functions of these Vedic assemblies from their other activities, which again bespeaks of their primitive, communal identity. Political functions mark the *sabhā* and *samiti* more prominently, although it is difficult to confine these bodies to any period or area. Vedic assemblies were mostly local congregations dealing with local problems; it would be far-fetched to think in terms of some national assembly covering all the Vedic peoples.

The assemblies of the early Vedic period indicate an extremely rudimentary administrative organization. But in the later Vedic age the jewel-offering ceremony discloses a fairly developed administrative machinery. Its most striking feature was the establishment of the office of the collector of taxes, which were probably voluntary in the tribal stage. The tribal order was further undermined by the growing importance of the brāhmaṇa and rājanya, who came to occupy higher positions in the ratnin list. Nevertheless, in so far as the body of the ratnins was predominantly military in character and similar to the council of twelve among early Indo-European peoples, it retained certain primitive traits. Such rituals as cow-raid, game of dice, chariot-race, etc., betray the tribal remnants of the later Vedic polity. At bottom the various consecration ceremonies were either so many ordeals intended to test the qualifications of the candidate for the chieftainship of the tribe, or initiation rites to signalise a new phase in the life of the sacrificer. But these were reduced to lifeless

forms divested of all reality; in practice the later Vedic polity had become largely territorial and class-dominated.

In post-Vedic times, from *c.* 600 B.C. onwards, varṇa or social class superseded tribal elements and emerged as an important factor in law and politics. Considerations of varṇa apparently influenced the various organs of the state such as the king, ministers or high functionaries, the *pariṣad*, the *paura*, the *jānapada* and army. The origin and growth of the Dharmaśāstra law were conditioned by the varṇa system, and civil and criminal laws discriminated between one social order and another. The need for combination and co-operation between the two upper orders is emphasised, although in actual politics sometimes the kṣatriyas, and, at other times the brāhmaṇas, enjoyed the upper hand. As a social order the vaiśyas or the śūdras never acquired any dominant role in politics.

The main stages in the history of ancient Indian polity can be identified. The earliest stage was that of tribal military democracy in which tribal asssemblies, which had some place for women, were mainly preoccupied with war. The age of the *Ṛg Veda* was primarily a period of assemblies. The second stage saw the break-up of the tribal polity under the stress of the emergence of the social orders called varṇas and the beginnings of the fixed territorial habitat of once wandering tribes, leading to the growth of kingship and origins of taxes and bureaucracy. During the third stage arose the large territorial monarchies of Kosala and Magadha and tribal oligarchies in north-western India and in the foot of the Himalayas. For the first time we hear of large standing armies and an organised machinery for the collection of the land revenue. But the class of landed intermediaries was small and did not enjoy any administrative concessions. The fourth or the Maurya phase was that of bureaucratic centralisation based on the expanding economic activities of the state. The state control of all spheres of life was justified by the theory of the near absolutism of the king. In the Maurya period religion was cleverly exploited for serving political ends. Since Kauṭilya supports the brāhmaṇical social order and opposes heretical sects the state policy recommended by him cannot be regarded as secular. But he does not hesitate to override brāhmaṇical professions wherever and whenever they come into conflict with the interersts of

the ruler intent on conquest. Kauṭilya makes bold and deliberate use of superstition to secure the loyalty of the masses to the state by hoodwinking them. But by way of genuine deification of the king there is little in his treatise.

The fifth stage was marked by the process of decentralised administration in which towns, feudatories and military elements came to the forefront in both the Deccan and the North. This was partly neutralised by the emphasis on the divinity of the king. The Kuṣāṇa princes assumed the official title of *deva-putra* and instituted the cult of the worship of the dead king, and the Sātavāhana princes came to be compared to deified epic heroes. The last stage, identical with the Gupta period, may be called the period of proto-feudal polity. The land grants now played an important part in the formation of the political structure, and those made by the Gupta feudatories conferred fiscal and administrative privileges on priestly beneficiaries. It is doubtful whether civil officers were allotted land for their services to the state, and the grant of land for military service, so characteristic of European political feudalism, was absent in the India of Gupta and post-Gupta times. On the other hand from the first century A.D. onwards decentralised administration was sustained by a marked growth in the powers of the caste and professional guilds and also of village headmen and elders.

The present study would show that polity and political ideas in ancient India were not always moulded by any single factor. The tribal set-up seems to have been an important element in Vedic times, but social orders and territorial states emerged as decisive factors in post-Vedic days. Economic activities and the needs of a vast empire determined the Maurya mechanism for administration. Although the impact of trade on polity was felt in post-Maurya times, in the Gupta period land grants contributed to the formation of administrative structure. A few foreign features appeared in the post-Maurya polity, but by and large developments continued on indigenous lines. The influence of religion is perceptible throughout, but even the ideas and institutions known from religious texts reflect the changing social and economic background.

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168	16	Jasyaswal	Jayaswal
177	2	śūdras	śūdra
185	25	this responsibility is	is this responsibility
186	18	afflicated	afflicted
193	5	*jivikā*	*jīvikā*
200	1	had	"had
200	15	trend	trend-
212	25	Sātavāhana	Sātavāhanas
229	14	the Kharoṣṭhī	Kharoṣṭhī
231	21	Tibet	Tiber
239	fn. 1	Infra	Supra
239	30	of tenure	tenure
242	24-25	one-fourth their	one-fourth of their
268	31	bricks	bricks on a large scale
282	29	recepient	recipient
299	33	portions	portion
300	2	*udyaṅga*	*udraṅga*
300	36	is	in

In fn. 1 on p. 13 read 1964 for 1963. Delete fn. 3 in the body of the text and at the bottom on p. 176 and also fn. 1 at both places on p. 232.

ADDENDUM

In ABBREVIATIONS also read : *JOR, Journal of Oriental Research,* Madras.